

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO IRAQGATE?

Jan. 22 - Feb. 4, 1996

IN THESE TIMES

IDENTITY

CRISIS

Getting beyond the politics
of racial polarization

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BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

EDITORIAL

THE FEDERAL BUDGET'S BOTTOM LINE

Is there something wrong here? The White House and the Republican Congress both claim they are trying to save Medicare by shoving or inducing recipients away from independent doctors and into HMOs—organizations that save money by being frugal in providing care. Yet the average annual income of an HMO executive is by far the highest of any industry. For example, the chairman and CEO of an HMO called Foundation Health Care received \$6.1 million in 1994, and the chairman and CEO of U.S. Healthcare received \$4 million. They can make this kind of money because their HMOs screen potential members to get the healthiest patients, and because they have company agents, rather than doctors, make decisions about expensive procedures. If relatively healthy Medicare recipients are allowed to join such HMOs, less healthy recipients will be left in a pool that needs more care per capita. And, of course, the medical costs per capita will then be much higher than they are now. As a result, little or nothing will be saved on Medicare but a handful of HMO executives and stockholders will make a killing, possibly in more ways than one.

That's just one example of how the budget-cutting process is helping corporate special interests while eliminating social spending. Provisions to reduce taxes for the wealthy abound in the pending Republican budget proposal. The largest is a \$36 billion reduction (over seven years) in the tax on capital gains, a measure justified by the myth that this will increase productive investment. But there are also provisions to lessen the tax burden for insurance firms, newspaper publishers, small natural gas and water utilities and many more favored industries.

Meanwhile, Republican senators and House members—and even an occasional Democrat—have been busy slipping in windfalls for special friends, as the *Washington Post* recently reported. Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS), for example, has put in a proposal to raise the income cap on tax-free funeral insurance by \$2,000, a provision that will benefit only a few dozen firms. That change was obtained by lobbyists for American Home Life Insurance Inc., a firm that has a former Dole aide as its Washington representative. Similarly, Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK) inserted a provision to help save convenience stores that also pump gas \$118 million over

seven years, and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer (R-TX) extended research and experiment tax credits to friends in the electronics industry at a cost to the public of \$3 billion. (Texas has the country's second highest concentration of electronic firms.)

Infuriating as they are, these examples of the corporate corruption of our legislative process pale beside bipartisan collusion in maintaining military spending at a level needed to fight major wars simultaneously on two fronts.

With the Cold War over, and the Russian

Army barely able to defeat the rebels in Chechnya, not a single potential enemy nation has the capacity to threaten the United States. No one denies this obvious truth, yet our military spending remains sacrosanct at almost \$250 billion. And while they are scrambling to cut spending on unemployment insurance, education, food stamps and health care, the Republicans have added \$7 billion to the defense spending bill that even the military and the White House insist is not needed.

For his part, as President Bush did before him, Clinton is spending billions of dollars to promote foreign arms sales—and, thereby, to increase the international arms race and the destabilization of the developing world. Legislators rationalize this waste by claiming that our poor arms manufacturers need the added sales to maintain their capacity to produce

even more arms, should the need arise. But the actual effect is to divert resources—not only in the United States but throughout the world—away from productive investment and desperately needed social spending.

This is the price of corporate control of government, and the installation of the bottom line as the nation's ruling principle. In one sense, of course, it has always been true that, as Calvin Coolidge

The GOP's proposed budget represents the triumph of government by and for corporate special interests.

said, the business of government is business. But in the past, popular forces on the left, and especially the labor movement, have used democracy to enforce a social compact that protected the minimal needs of working people and our natural environment.

The self-destruction of the left and the weakness of labor leave only the irresolute Clinton administration, which has already granted many cherished Republican budget cuts, to stand in the way of further damage. A new left is desperately needed if we are to rebuild our nation on humane lines. ◀

IN THESE TIMES

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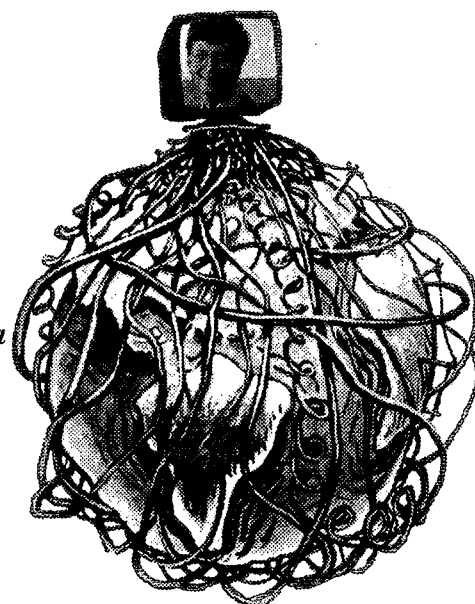


Identity crisis

Racial polarization divided the country in 1995. Can America move beyond the impasse?

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

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LETTERS

Living a lie?

Contrary to the reporting of Joe Peschek ("Living large," November 27), the St. Paul "living wage initiative" was one of the worst instances of a wolf in progressive clothing that I've ever seen. Peschek attributed the initiative's defeat to the evil machinations of the mayor and corporate America. But the initiative was doomed by its own considerable failings.

I live in the "demographically disadvantaged" neighborhood this initiative was supposed to help. In its living wage plan, the New Party and ACORN wanted to create a \$7.21 minimum wage. But where would ACORN have been when all the \$7.21-an-hour jobs at Cub Foods on University Avenue disappeared because the prices in our neighborhood were 20 percent higher than at Cub Foods in Roseville? Did they imagine that neighborhood residents would have paid 20 percent more for their groceries just to

express solidarity with the employees on University Avenue? Trust me, they wouldn't have.

ACORN's inability to understand that metropolitan areas are interactive systems is mere ignorance or incompetence. And the little-publicized "hiring hall" provision of the initiative was the real "economic terrorism" of which Peschek says the mayor spoke—only I'd call it "fascist," not "Stalinesque." What that provision said is that, to comply with the ordinance, would-be employees and employers could no longer deal directly with each other.

To obtain a "qualifying job," my neighbors and I would have had to be screened and approved by a "community-based hiring hall," the definition of which only ACORN just happened to meet. Then, that hiring hall would decide to which employers we'd be referred. Come on, guys, you're in Chicago. You know what a ward healer is. You really think it's anti-progres-

sive to oppose an initiative that would hand out private sector jobs the same way city jobs are handed out down there? The city's economic development bureaucrats may be incompetent, but ACORN is dangerous.

Nobody in St. Paul, including most business people, disputes the fact that city agencies have made some poor investments in the past. But the answer to bad investments that don't create jobs is to change the investment policies, not to restrict the freedom of city residents and prospective employers to deal with each other.

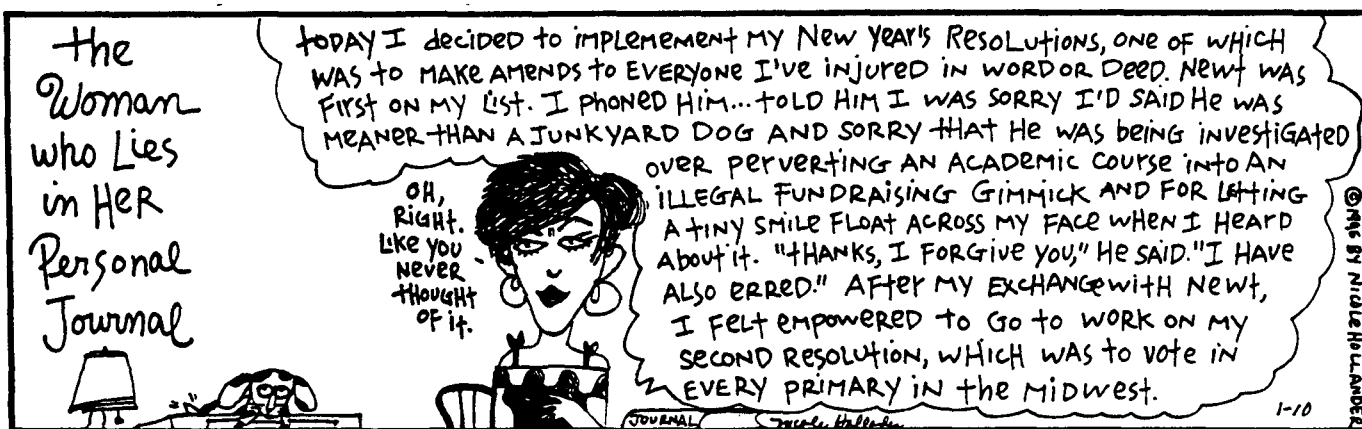
If ACORN really wanted to do something about poverty in this area, it would direct its attention to the St. Paul School District. Among the students I've known in the 15 years I've lived here, it has managed to educate only one of them well enough to read a newspaper. There are dozens of small manufacturers in this neighborhood, with \$15-, \$20- and \$25-an-hour machining and mold-making jobs going begging.

ACORN and the New Party should stop making straw men out of what are mostly small employers and a mayor whose only real problem is that he craves power more than they do. Instead of seeking to control which of us gets a job working for whom, they should take on the bureaucrats that are failing to provide the people in this area with the capabilities to control their own lives.

Margaret Thorpe
St. Paul, Minn.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



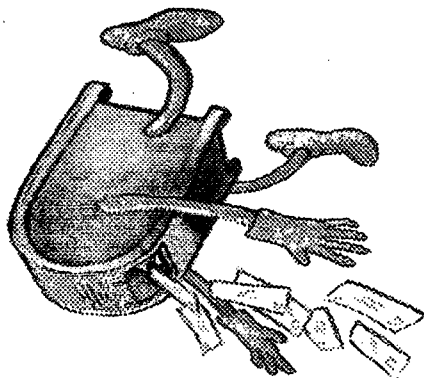
Joe Peschek replies: Margaret Thorpe recycles Chamber of Commerce misinformation. The St. Paul initiative did not call for the creation of a \$7.21 minimum wage. Rather, its wage and job provisions would have applied only to those businesses receiving at least \$25,000 a year in public subsidies. Its precise intent was to change public investment policies so that scarce city tax dollars reward economic activity that creates jobs paying at least a poverty-level wage.

Thorpe's allegation that community hiring halls would be "fascist" is absurd. Subsidized businesses would have been required to use community hiring halls "to the greatest extent feasible," already a common practice. The Department of Planning and Economic Development could have designated a variety of organizations as hiring halls, not just ACORN. The aim was to create a stronger economic base and a safer community by making outreach efforts to unemployed and underemployed city residents.

Living wage and corporate accountability campaigns are among the most important progressive efforts in the country. In 1996 the New Party, of which I am an active member, will be working on revised legislation for St. Paul and Minneapolis. If Thorpe really cares about people controlling their own lives, she should join us.

Utter nonsense?

George Cothran's article on Willie Brown ("Imperial politics," December 25) renders a completely false account of both the new mayor and San Francisco politics. According to Cothran, Brown has already demonstrated his "imperial style" by urging city supervisors to scuttle "electoral reform." In truth, the district election schemes rejected by the Board of Supervisors were opposed by many if not most progressive interests. While some progressives saw any form of district elections as better than citywide races, many others opposed having voters



choose among four complex plans during what is expected to be a very low-turnout March 1996 statewide election. The prospect of conservative new election districts explains why the proposed measures were supported by downtown corporations and the local Republican Party. It also explains why Calvin Welch, the leader of the city's district election movement, and Supervisor Sue Bierman, the leading neighborhood activist on the board, both opposed the reforms. Since Brown's mayoral campaign was endorsed by 10 supervisors and the district election proposals were defeated by a 5-to-5 vote (six votes were required), Cothran's assertions that Brown's influence was critical and that his opposition served downtown interests are utter nonsense.

Cothran also falsely claims that outgoing Mayor Frank Jordan "generally had his way with the board." The liberal Board of Supervisors vigorously and successfully opposed Jordan's regressive proposals. Once Brown assumes power, however, the question becomes whether San Francisco's progressive supervisors and constituencies will act with equal vigor when dealing with a liberal Democratic mayor. We have all seen self-identified progressive legislators sacrifice their constituencies' interests to curry favor with newly elected Democratic Party presidents, governors or mayors. Whether progressive San Franciscans hold Brown accountable should prove an excellent model for whether activists have learned from the mistakes of the Clinton years.

Randy Shaw
San Francisco

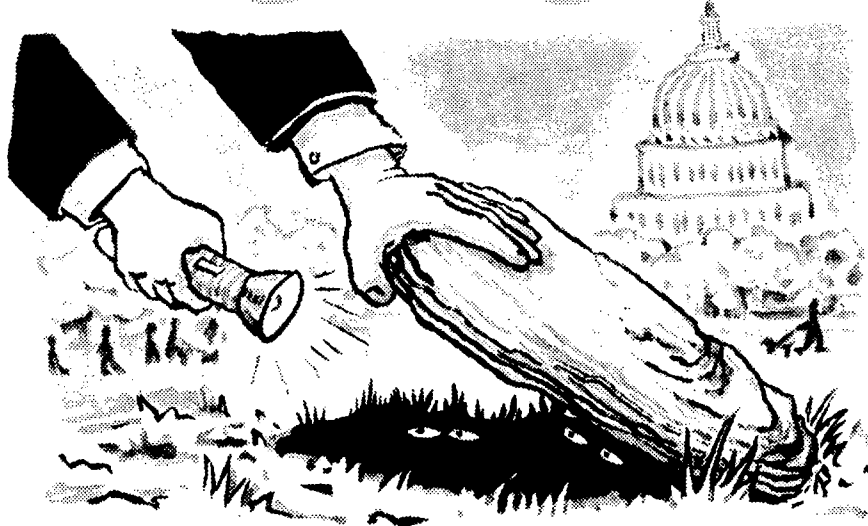
George Cothran replies: Randy Shaw has always tended to believe that progressive politics in San Francisco revolves around him and the network of activists he works with. With all due respect for his exemplary work at the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, Shaw does not even begin to represent the diverse voices—especially in communities of color—that make up the city's liberal/progressive plurality. If he were to expand his phone tree, he would find scores of progressives who were aghast and angered by the Board of Supervisors' rejection of the district elections plan and Mayor-elect Brown's role in that decision. Shaw says the plan was rejected because it was too complex and backed by corporations and Republicans. Yeah, that's the cynical spin some supervisors put on their decision. But the more probable reason the board rejected the district elections measure was because it would have ensured a progressive turnout in the March election when the supervisors' and the mayor's cherished proposal to fund a new baseball stadium will be on the ballot. Progressives have traditionally rejected ballpark proposals. Finally, Shaw worries that progressive supervisors will sacrifice the interests of their constituencies to curry favor with Brown. I agree. But I add one more concern: that progressive activists like Shaw sacrifice longstanding progressive goals such as a more democratic electoral system in order to curry favor with a new Democratic mayor.

Corrections

•Due to an editing error, the review of Elinor Burkett's book ("A plague on all houses," January 8) incorrectly described Burkett's medical status. In fact, Burkett is not HIV-positive.

•The photo of Kweisi Mfume on page 21 of the January 8 issue should have been credited as follows: ©1995, Jay Mallin/Impact Visuals.

InSHORT



LIMELIGHT ON LOBBYISTS

For 50 years, loophole-ridden regulations have allowed thousands of Washington lobbyists to wine, dine and whisper in the ears of lawmakers without disclosing their activities to the public. But on December 19, President Clinton signed a bipartisan bill refining and expanding the definition of lobbying, and ostensibly forcing incognito lobbyists into the public spotlight.

According to Gary Ruskin of the Congressional Accountability Project, the lax 1946 Lobbying Regulation Act let an estimated 10,000 Washington lobbyists operate without oversight. Ruskin believes the new law—which requires people who spend more than 20 percent of their working hours lobbying to actually

register as lobbyists—should unearth a number of previously unaccounted-for influence peddlers. Anne McBride,

president of Common Cause, believes the legislation “is an important breakthrough in political reform.”

But other observers aren’t so sure. Critics complain that the new legislation fails to curb “astroturf” lobbying, a fast-growing technique in which corporations fund e-mail, fax and letter campaigns aimed at Congress. “This is the giant loophole that wasn’t closed,” says D.C. lobbyist Thomas Susman of the law firm Ropes & Gray. Without federal oversight of these high-priced campaigns, an important tool of special-interest manipulation will remain largely invisible to the public, charges Ellen Miller, director of the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan research group.

Moreover, say critics, revamped legislation will make it easier for foreign influence over domestic affairs to go undetected. Under old regulations, lobbyists who worked for overseas clients filed separate registrations with the Department of Justice. Now they simply register—along with everyone else—with Congress.

The new law also relaxes 1946 rules that forced lobbyists to file disclosure forms four times a year; new regulations cut that number in half. As the *Legal Times* recently stressed, “A lobbyist who signs up a client in

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Dead men do tell tales

NO ONE KNOWS HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE fighting between Islamic fundamentalists and Algeria’s military regime. “It’s a hidden war,” said Selima Ghezali, the editor of the Algerian weekly *La Nation*, in a recent talk sponsored by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. Though much international attention has been paid to the 52 journalists murdered by Islamic fundamentalists since 1993, extrajudicial killings by the government have received little press—largely because of strict government censorship. “You have a regime that is much more Machiavellian than one could have imagined,” Ghezali said, explaining that Algeria’s military leaders resurrect dead journalists as public relations flacks. “[It] uses these assassinations for its own benefit,” she said. “We know that there is mobilization abroad over the killings, and that is something we need. At the same time, when these protests come out, the Algerian newspapers that support the regime put these protests very prominently in the paper to show that there’s support for the regime abroad.” Ghezali’s paper has been regularly persecuted for advocating political dialogue with the Islamic opposition. —Joel Bleifuss



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APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



Weekend warriors 4.2

In Miami, Republicans recently held a weekend retreat, a celebration of political incorrectness they called—ho! ho!—"Dark Ages Weekend." Dark Agers were explicitly forbidden to engage in group hugs by event organizers, but encouraged to smoke, wear furs and fill the air with chlorofluorocarbons. After listening to talks explaining that "cutting government is the ultimate act of compassion," participants could release some of their tension in aerobic boxing classes by slamming away at pictures of Democrats attached to punching bags.

Psychic friend 6.1

Perhaps Orange County's bankruptcy was, quite literally, in the cards. According to grand jury testimony obtained by the *Los Angeles Times*, former Orange County Treasurer

Robert L. Citron relied on astrologers and psychics for advice about investments. According to former county finance director Eileen Walsh, learning of Citron's psychic leanings caused her to wonder if the county was "in a lot deeper problem than anyone could possibly imagine."

The quiet man 6.7

A recent *New York Times* profile of accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh offers the startling revelation that in the years before his arrest the skinny right-wing loner was, well, a skinny loner who liked to talk about guns and Adolf Hitler. "Everybody who met him described him the same: quiet, polite, neat," the *Times* reports. "Yet, as commonplace as this seems, criminologists say, these traits are often the stuff of serial killers, terrorists and other solitary mur-

derers." Of all the *Times* interviewees, Lynda Haner-Mele, McVeigh's former supervisor at Burns International Security Services, remembers him most vividly: "He was the thinnest person I've ever seen. He was so thin. God, he was thin." And while McVeigh's lean frame did draw the attention of one female admirer ("I've always been attracted to tall, skinny guys," notes student Catina Lawson), the neo-fascist neatnik ruined it all by talking a little too much about one of his heroes. "He ... talked about Hitler; this is what made me angry," Lawson told the *Times*. "From what I remember, he said he didn't necessarily agree with all those Jews being killed. But he said Hitler had the right plan. ... I didn't like him after that."

Stunned by a stupid statement? Nauseated by a noxious news story? Contact the Appall-O-Meter, c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Please enclose a copy of the appalling item.

ist with Alliance for Justice, which works on behalf of progressive groups and nonprofit organizations, and which pushed hard to get the new lobbying law passed. "If Dole knows they have to disclose that, the meeting might never take place."

But the CRP's Miller calls it "incredible" that lobbyists aren't required to report the names of the officials they court. Miller also faults the law's failure to provide any enforcement mechanism. All in all, she believes the new regulations will enable lobbyists to continue operating below the public radar. According to Miller, "The bill lulls the public into thinking something is being done about the influence of lobbying."

—Josh Feit

CHEMICAL INACTION

As the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons continues to deteriorate, government officials are scrambling to find a safe disposal plan. Though the Army is scheduled to destroy the nation's estimated 30,000 metric tons of chemical weapons by New Year's Eve 2004, prospects for meeting that deadline don't look good.

The Army has already readjusted its original 1985 cost estimate for the program from \$1.7 billion to \$11.9 billion, and so far, only two of nine planned incinerators for the weapons have been built. Just one facility, on Johnson Atoll in the Pacific, is operational. Progress there was set back in 1992, when a warhead exploded inside one of the facility's furnaces. The explosion and other difficulties caused the Army to lower its incineration goal from a planned 24 warheads per hour to 10. Even this lowered goal is misleading—the operational average is only seven.

The problem of dealing with obsolete and deadly chemical weapons isn't new. Since the 1910s, the Army

August, for example, is not required to register until mid-February of the following year. ... It doesn't help the public to learn after an election that six months before, Senator So-and-so was heavily lobbied by this or that special interest." A similar loophole allows lobbying that costs less than \$20,000 to go unreported—an oversight even lobbyists criticize. "Significant" lobbying will continue undetected, says Susman. "I would have set the threshold

lower," he adds.

Another controversial provision allows lobbyists to withhold names of congressmen, staffers or federal agency executives they contact. Some liberal groups support this provision, however, warning that full disclosure rules could have a chilling effect on the ability of progressive lobbyists to meet with more conservative legislators. "Say a gay-rights lobbyist wants to meet with Dole," argues Deborah Lewis, a lobby-

has been searching for ways to get rid of old arms. At first it was easy. With little oversight and scant concern for public health, the Army simply dumped the arms into the ocean, burned them in open pits, or buried them in thinly populated areas. Such crude methods finally went out of vogue in 1969, when the National Academy of Sciences released a report emphasizing the need to protect public health and the environment. The report recommended two alternate disposal strategies: chemical neutralization or incineration. In 1982, after chemical neutralization proved slow and hard to automate, the Army settled on high-temperature incineration as the best way to destroy the weapons. The push to eliminate the nation's stockpile began in 1985, when Congress ordered the Army to destroy its existing weapons by 1994. But persistent technical problems forced the Army to push that deadline back 10 years.

Increasingly stringent state environmental laws and concern from communities near the proposed incineration sites have further slowed the Army's plans. In its efforts to reassure local residents

about the safety of disposal plans, the Army has emphasized the high-tech design of its incinerators. And military officials insist that they are prepared for any potential accident: They have drafted a plan—the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP)—to deal with leaks of chemical or nerve agents into the atmosphere. But CSEPP has provided little comfort to residents living near the Army stockpiles. During a December 1 test of 23 warning sirens in Richmond, Ky., a stampede of panicked parents, not realizing the well-publicized event was only a test, rushed to schools to retrieve their children. Other residents ignored the drill completely.

Since 1991, seven of the eight incineration sites in the continental United States have relied on mass mailings of free calendars—replete with nature scenes and evacuation instructions—as their primary means of dispersing information about emergency plans.

With \$2 billion spent and only 2 percent of the United States' chemical weapons destroyed,

the Government Accounting Office recently questioned whether “the chemical stockpile can be safely stored until 2004.”

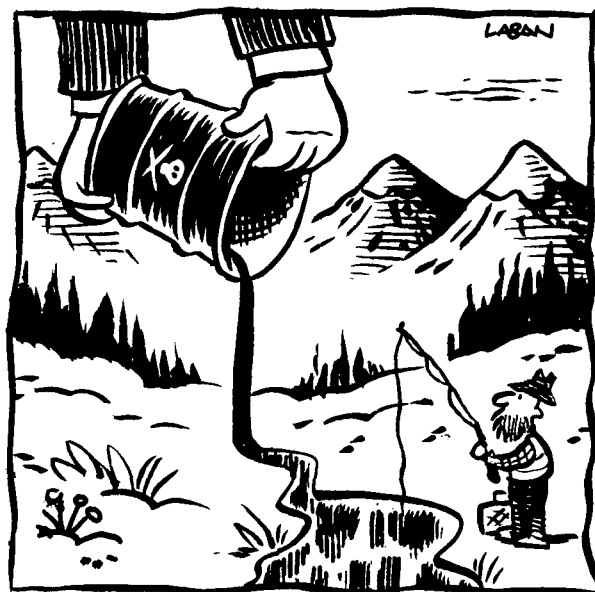
A study by the Stimson Center, a nonpartisan research institute that studies national security issues, reported that between 1984 and 1994 more than 1,800 leaks were detected in the stockpile—many of them in M55 rockets, which are considered the most dangerous munitions and are stored at sites in Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, Utah, Oregon and on Johnston Atoll. For now, says Stimson's Amy Smithson, the Army can do little more than “be as candid as possible about the status of the program and keep pressing forward with plans” lest the program stall out altogether. “It's a thankless task,” she says, “but they have to continue trying to destroy this stuff.”

—Ashley Craddock

Hold the toxics

EXXON IS BETTING THAT WISCONSIN WILL APPROVE ITS APPLICATION to create a toxic waste dump that would cover an area the size of 360 football fields and be 90 feet deep. The proposed dump would be located at the headwaters of the Wolf River and would hold the toxic tailings from a zinc and copper mine that Exxon wants to build near Crandon, Wis. The mine would empty more than 1 million gallons of wastewater into the environment.

Because of Exxon's plans, American Rivers, a national conservation group, has listed the Wolf as one of the 20 “most threatened and endangered rivers in North America.” About 50 plants and animals that live around the proposed mine site are listed as rare or endangered by the state of Wisconsin. The U.S. Department of the Interior has said Exxon's mine “may have a substantial and unacceptable impact on aquatic resources of national importance.” But Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson and the state's Department of Natural Resources support the company's plans. The Chippewa and Potawatomi tribes that live in the area fear the proposed project would destroy the natural environment that is the basis for their traditional way of life. The Indians have vowed to stop the mine, and are spending their considerable casino dollars to fight the proposal. —J.B.



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Racism and the Paper of record

There is one story you may not find in the *New York Times*. Last fall, the nation's newspaper of record fired Angela Dodson—its only senior editor who was both female and African-American—and now Dodson has slapped the *Times* with a discrimination suit. In a complaint filed with New York City's Human Rights Commission, Dodson charges that top *Times* managers discriminated against her on the basis of race, gender and disability (she suffered from hypertension, carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive stress injuries).

A one-time copy editor, Dodson edited the Living section before being promoted to the prestigious post of Style Department editor in 1991. But Dodson says *Times* managers merely gave her the job's title and little of its authority. Then-executive editor Max Frankel and then-managing editor Joseph Lelyveld excluded Dodson from meetings, lunches, trips and trainings that her job description required her to attend, according to Dodson's complaint. While her subordinates met with her supervisors, Dodson was left out of the loop. "The *Times* discriminated against me on the basis of my race," her complaint alleges, "by treating me as less competent than my white employees."

In 1992, Dodson acquired an even more lofty title when she became a senior editor. But Dodson charges that during her tenure in that job her supervisors were "inappropriately inquiring into my personal family matters ... and continuously making derogatory, baseless comments to me which implied that my parenting

and housekeeping skills were less than competent."

Severe carpal tunnel syndrome and hypertension forced Dodson to take a 13-month leave of absence starting in the middle of 1994. When she tried to return, top managers told Dodson that her job no longer existed.

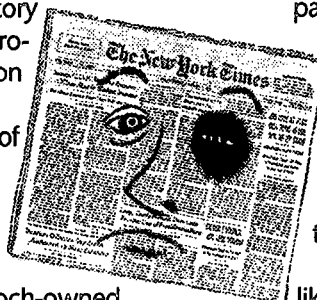
The irony that the *Times*—a paper with a long history of publishing pro-affirmative action editorials—is being accused of discrimination has not gone unnoticed. The *New York Post*, a Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid, slammed the *Times* for hypocrisy when it broke the story last month.

Dodson's case is attracting considerable attention. Her lawyer says that Dan Rather, *Dateline NBC* and 60 Min-

utes have all called requesting an interview. The *Times*, meanwhile, refuses to talk. Vice President Nancy Nielsen would say only that the paper "categorically denies any charge of discrimination or improper treatment of Ms. Dodson."

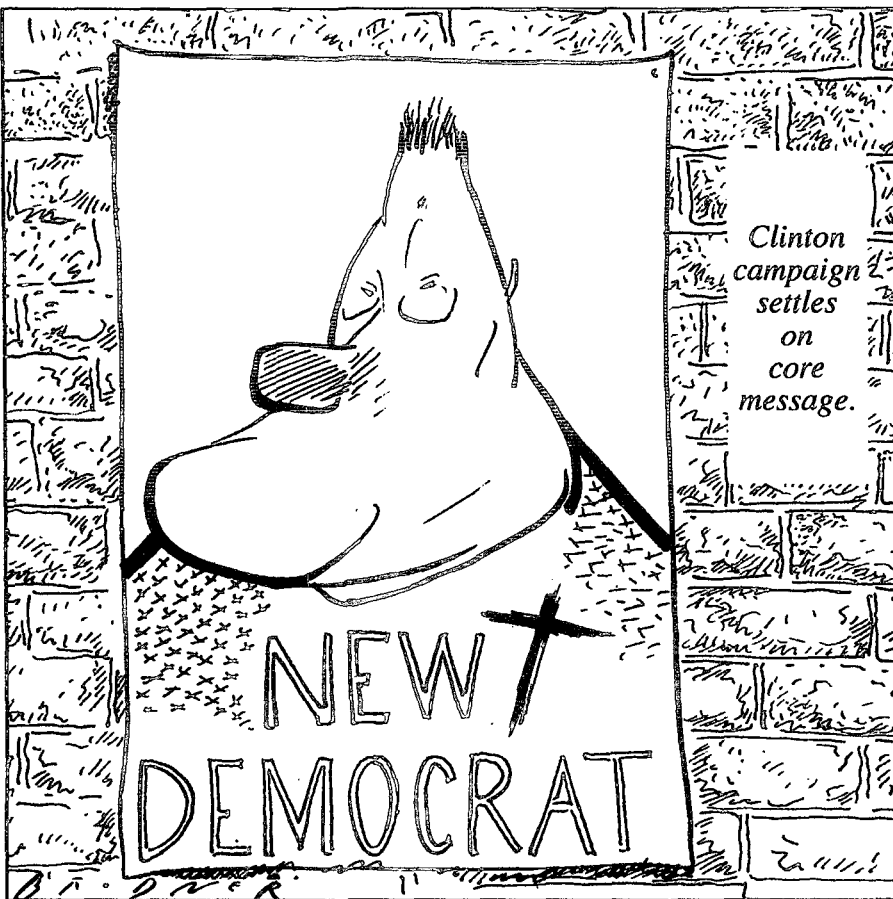
It is far too early to guess what will happen with Dodson's case, but the paper does have a history of managing to avoid potentially embarrassing trials. Two high-profile class-action discrimination suits brought against the *Times* in the 1970s—one filed by female employees, the other by minorities—were settled before trial.

Although Dodson's case will most likely drag on for months, it already has produced a ripple effect. As news of her lawsuit has spread, frustrated minority and female employees at media outlets across New York have phoned Dodson's lawyer requesting representation.



TOMORROW'S NEWS TONIGHT

By Steve Brodner



TAXPAYERS REVOLT?

In mid-December, leading Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole sent tremors through the party's right wing when he admitted on NBC's *Meet the Press* that he did not support a constitutional amendment banning abortion. With the GOP's front-runner softening his line on abortion and moderating his stance in the budget showdown, hard-line conservatives have been threatening to take their votes elsewhere in November.

One group uniquely poised to take advantage of such infighting is the U.S. Taxpayers Party (USTP), a four-year-old national party that stresses pure-bred social conservatism and unapologetic Bible-thumping. The 12,000-member USTP was founded by Howard Phillips, who has gone on record blaming women's suffrage for the "sexual liberation of the woman from her husband." A one-time member of the Nixon administration, Phillips also goes way back with the Christian right. In 1979, he helped found the Moral Majority, which helped push Ronald Reagan into office a year later.

In 1992, Phillips was the USTP candidate, appearing on the ballot in some 20 states. This year, the USTP's national convention is scheduled to begin in San Diego in August—the day after the end of the Republican convention, also in San Diego. That way, if the Republican nominee is insufficiently conservative, the USTP will be ready to step into the breach. Although Republican presidential contender and anti-abortion hard-liner Pat Buchanan has disavowed any plans to run as an independent candidate if he loses the GOP nomination, some observers speculate that the Taxpayers will try to



recruit the former Republican speechwriter to run as their candidate. Whether or not Buchanan leads the fray, the USTP may offer some of the GOP's dependable foot soldiers—religious conservatives and pro-life stalwarts—a more palatable alternative than front-runner Dole.

In April, the premiere issue of *The New Party News*, the USTP's official publication, proclaimed the Confederate Constitution the "highest development of the Constitutional tradition." The issue also included the party's National Platform Preamble, which asks for "the blessing of the Lord God as Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the Universe and of this Nation" and claims that the U.S. Constitution "is rooted in Biblical law."

And make no mistake about it, the USTP embraces the vengeful message of an angry God. At an August USTP banquet in his honor, leading

anti-abortion firebrand and party stalwart Randall Terry warned doctors who perform abortions, "When I, or people like me are running the country, you'd better flee, because we will find you, we will try you, and we'll execute you."

—Sasha Abramsky

GUATEMALAN STANDOFF

For three years, hard-liners within the Guatemalan military have tried to intimidate Jennifer Harbury into abandoning her crusade to prove their guilt in the death of her husband, guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca Velásquez. Two recent attacks in Washington, D.C. may show how desperate they've become.

On January 5, a firebomb exploded outside the home of Harbury's attorney, José Pertierra, leaving his 1994 Acura Legend a charred wreck. Neither Pertierra nor his wife, both of whom were in the house sleeping at the time, were injured by the early morning blast. Less than 24 hours later, a house belonging to the Assisi Community, where Harbury stays when she is in Washington, was sprayed with gunfire. No one was injured in the attack, although one bullet was found lodged in a wall just four feet from the bed of one member of the religious community.

Federal investigators decline to characterize the firebombing as a political or terrorist act, but early evidence, they say, indicates that it was not an amateur attempt at vandalism but a deliberate attack carried out by assailants "with experience." FBI officials also downplay any link between the two attacks, noting that gunfire is common in the neighborhood where the Assisi Community is located.

Pertierra, however, maintains that the bombing and shooting were the work of "hard-line elements" within the Guatemalan military. (If such a connection is proven, it would be the

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first time in nearly 20 years that international politics has inspired a terrorist attack in Washington. In 1976, former Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier and an associate were killed by a car bomb planted by Cuban exiles working for the Chilean secret police.)

"This may be unusual in Washington, D.C., but in Guatemala it happens all the time," says the 43-year-old Cuban attorney, adding that many Guatemalan civilian officials probing the 1992 death of Bámaca have received death threats. The Washington attacks, he said, were intended to end the investigations into Bámaca's death, in which a high-ranking Guatemalan military official on the CIA's payroll and others have been implicated.

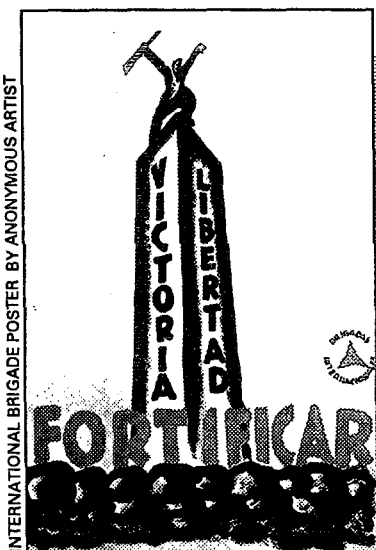
Pertierra points out that the attacks, for which no one has claimed credit, occurred at a critical moment in Harbury's case. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission is about to rule on her allegations of army abuses against Bámaca and other missing Guatemalans. Pertierra expects the commission to recommend prosecuting the case in international courts.

More important, Harbury is currently in Guatemala to execute a court order allowing her to enter the army base where her husband's body is believed to be buried. The base, located in the remote department of San Marcos, is also suspected to contain the graves of several hundred other victims of military repression.

Although Pertierra is confident that Harbury will not submit to intimidation, he worries that the recent attacks may scare key Guatemalan officials. Last fall, the special prosecutor who had assisted Harbury to obtain the court order resigned after he was attacked by gunmen in his Guatemala City office. Pertierra fears that his successor, whose support Harbury needs to enforce the court order, may react similarly. "We're very worried [the new prosecutor] may be scared off the exhumation," he said. "If she shies away, [the bombing] will have succeeded." —Peter Zirnite

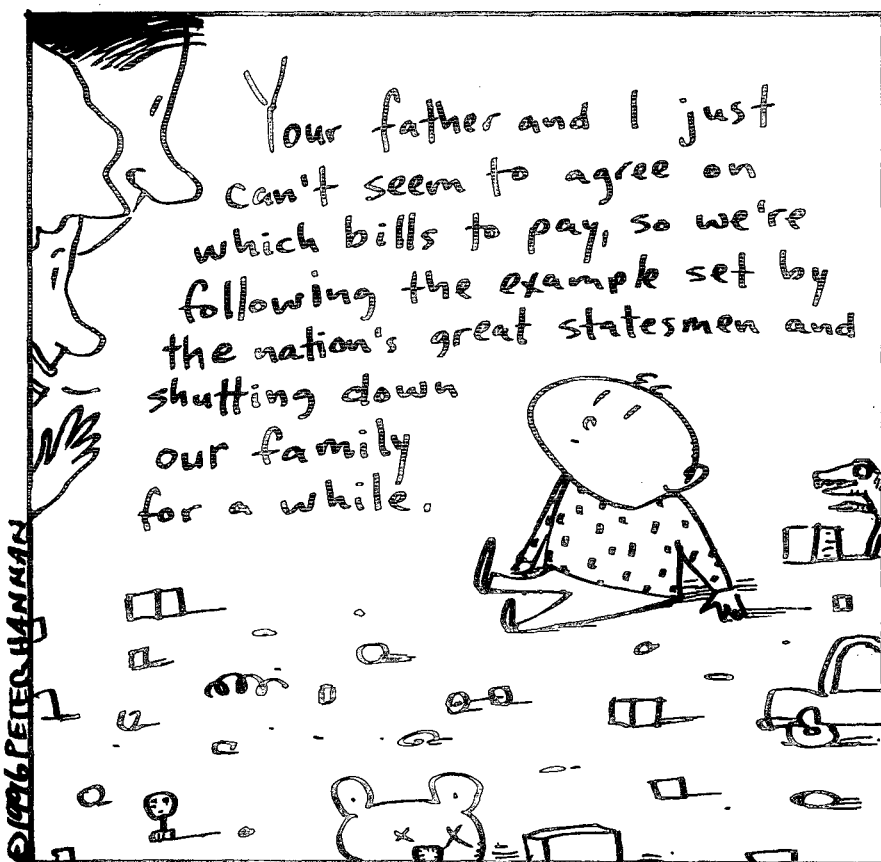
Honored for a good fight

THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT VOTED LAST NOVEMBER TO CONFER SPANISH CITIZENSHIP on the 500 or so foreign veterans of the Spanish Civil War who are still alive. Sixty years ago, 40-45,000 men and women from around the world traveled to Spain to defend the Spanish republic from attack by Gen. Francisco Franco's fascist forces. Those partisans included the 2,700 Americans who fought in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Brigade vet Leonard Levinson works at the group's New York office editing *Volunteer for Liberty*, the Brigade newsletter that serves an ever-declining readership. "We sunk below 200 in the last couple weeks," says Levinson. In the coming year, Levinson and other brigade members will return to Spain to commemorate the 60th anniversary of their arrival, and, for those that choose, to become Spanish citizens. The brigade is now busy trying to raise money to help finance a trip for those veterans who lack the resources. Donations can be sent to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade at VALB, Room 227, 799 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. —J.B.



THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



THE FIRST STONE

DOING RIGHT BY THE CAMPUS LEFT

By Joel Bleifuss

Working out of an office in Cambridge, Mass., a group of young people has hatched plans to revive the left on America's college campuses. Their organization, the Center for Campus Organizing, serves as a clearinghouse for a progressive student movement that is now regrouping after years of ideological combat with a highly organized and richly funded campus right.

Nicole Newton, 23, surveys the war zone as the field organizer for the center's national campus contact program. She comes to the group from Michigan State University, where she majored in women's studies. Part of her job includes educating students about how the right operates on campus.

"The right wing is very good at attracting students and packaging their messages," she says. "Right-wing leaders are convincing, and they are well funded. In essence, they are politically glamorous. The left is not. The picture that Rush Limbaugh paints of liberals is really how the college left is viewed on campuses. They are the people who have whims. Gay rights, feminist studies and black liberation, these are their whims."

This change in the public perception of the left didn't just happen. It is the result of a long-term campaign by New Right political strategists to build a right-wing student infrastructure. That investment, which started with the funding of conservative student papers in the early '80s, reached maturity 10 years later, when the campaign against "political correctness" effectively lampooned anyone in academia—and the world at large—who took ideals of social, economic and environmental justice seriously.

With the demise of the Cold War, the only red menace left is on campus. According to a survey by *Pink Sheet on the Left*, a far-right newsletter published in Washington, D.C., vanquishing the student left is now the No. 1 issue among diehard anti-communists. Reactionary individuals and right-wing foundations donate roughly \$20 million a

year to the campus right, says Rich Cowan, the 33-year-old founder and coordinator of the Center for Campus Organizing. Of that \$20 million, \$3.7 million came from nine right-wing foundations. (These foundation figures, which appear in the 1995 edition of *Who Gets Grants, Who Gives Grants*, are for 1992-93.) Where did that foundation money go?

In 1992-93, more than \$700,000 went to the Madison Center for Educational Affairs (MCEA). Founded in 1978 by neo-conservative Irving Kristol, this Washington-based group established and funds the Collegiate Network, an association of about 70 right-wing campus papers. The network's flagship paper is the *Dartmouth Review*, founded in 1981. Recently, the MCEA merged with the Intercollegiate

Studies Institute (ISI), a conservative group founded in 1953 to nurture student leaders and foster an allegiance to what the group terms "ordered liberty." The institute currently has about 2,500 adult representatives who mentor young conservatives on campus. The new and expanded organization will be based on a 23-acre estate in Greenville, Del., and will operate with an annual budget of \$3.5 million a year.

Another recipient of right-wing largesse is the National Association of Scholars (NAS), which was given \$708,000 to organize right-wing faculty. Established in 1987, the NAS publishes *Academic Questions*, a quarterly journal that "explores the conspicuous vices" of a higher education system where "standards have been eroded, the curriculum has been debased, and research has been trivialized or distorted by ideology." The group claims to have about 1,400 members in 17 states. As Sara Diamond has reported in *Covert Action*, NAS faculty at the University of Texas encouraged right-wing students to start a campaign that successfully defunded *Tejas*, a Chicano student newspaper.

Another \$187,000 went to Young America's Foundation (YAF). Founded in 1969 by a Vietnam vet, YAF sponsors a speakers program, an annual national youth conference and a newsletter that connects students with right-wing activists. YAF, which has an endowment of more than \$7 million and an annual budget of \$3 million, recently flexed its muscle at the traditionally liberal bastion of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. As part of a campaign to have the American flag displayed prominently at all U.S. universities, the Swarthmore Conservative Union—which receives \$30,000 a year from YAF—successfully forced the Quaker school to fly prominently an Old Glory.

On the left, campus organizations are poorer and fewer. Last year, the Center for Campus Organizing received just \$95,000 from five foundations. (Its total annual budget is \$112,000.) The center's Cowan, who has worked a day job since founding the group in 1991, says his group is one

of three national organizations that have started "providing a lot of support for campus work" in the past five years. The other two are the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC, pronounced "seek"), a Chapel Hill, N.C.-based group whose national conference last October attracted an estimated 2,000 student activists, and the Black Student Leadership Network, an African-American student group set up 1991 with the assistance of the Children's Defense Fund.

In general, left foundations have been slow to spend money on campus-oriented institutions. A progressive funder who has spent the past year studying college groups says the funding gap between left and right organizations is "very serious." According to this funder, who has asked to remain anonymous, "Progressive foundations have for years been funding proposals on a whole lot of stuff, but the right's organizing is very different in the sharpness of its focus and the clarity of its purpose."

Nevertheless, the Center for Campus Organizing has done amazingly well with the little money it has. *Link: The College Magazine*, which has a campus-based circulation of 1 million, reports that the center "is fast becoming the most influential college activist group in the country."

Jeremy Smith, who coordinates the center's Campus Alternative Journalism Project and edits its quarterly newsletter *Infusion*, says: "We are a communications and research hub. Our goal is to provide people with tools so they can be active. The reason we are a clearinghouse and not a network or an organization is that we feel the student left

needs ongoing stability. That is a niche we try to fill." For example, the center is currently working with a diverse collection of campus groups to organize support for affirmative action. March 14 has been set as "a day of action for access to education and affirmative action."

Smith, who has a degree in English from the University of Florida, also runs an e-mail network that keeps roughly 80 alternative campus newspapers in touch with each other. Eric Odell, a former SEACer who lives in New York, is the network's designated facilitator. According to Odell, "Our goal is to get as many campus alternative papers as possible to archive their articles in an electronic archive, so they can be downloaded and reprinted."

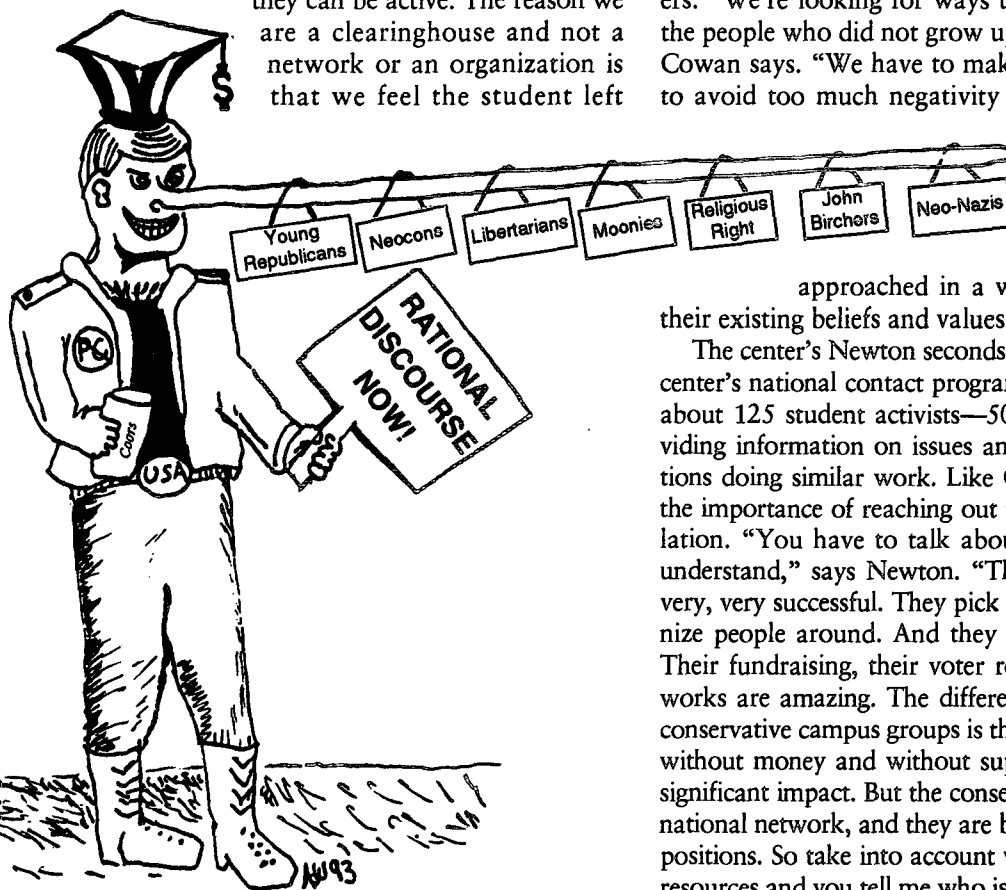
Though underfunded, the center is an example of the kind of sustainable management that Cowan, an MIT graduate, feels the left must learn. Cowan started the center after witnessing the demise of Science for the People. The 20-year-old public-interest group dissolved in 1990 after failing to pay its taxes for several years running. He says the center's goal is "to build organizations that will be immune to internal chaos. 'Too many left groups are dominated by the people who remain after those people who couldn't stand the dysfunctional nature of these groups have left,' says Cowan. 'People who can tolerate the dysfunctionality are a self-selected group who have total belief in the righteousness of their cause.'"

The center was not established to serve only true believers. "We're looking for ways to appeal to the majority of the people who did not grow up with a leftist perspective," Cowan says. "We have to make politics fun, and we have to avoid too much negativity in our activism. There are

many people who have the potential to agree with what we are saying, but those people have not been

approached in a way that is not offensive to their existing beliefs and values."

The center's Newton seconds that sentiment. Through the center's national contact program, she is in close touch with about 125 student activists—50 more than last year—providing information on issues and linking them to organizations doing similar work. Like Cowan, Newton emphasizes the importance of reaching out to the general student population. "You have to talk about issues in a way they can understand," says Newton. "That is why the right wing is very, very successful. They pick issues that are easy to galvanize people around. And they are an organizing machine. Their fundraising, their voter registration, their phone networks are amazing. The difference between the liberal and conservative campus groups is that the liberals are organizing without money and without support, and are still having a significant impact. But the conservatives have money, a large national network, and they are being groomed for leadership positions. So take into account who is organizing with what resources and you tell me who is winning."



RACE

Identity crisis

*In an America
marred by
increasing
racial
polarization,
progressives
must move
beyond
identity
politics.*

By Salim Muwakkil

E

arly on December 7, a black couple was brutally murdered while walking down a street in Fayetteville, N.C. The alleged killers, two white members of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, apparently chose their victims for no reason other than their racial identity. The soldiers are reportedly adherents of a neo-Nazi ideology that has found a home among some members of the nation's armed forces.

A day later in New York City's Harlem district, an enraged black man with a gun and a can of paint thinner burst into a Jewish-owned store, shouted "brothers get out," and fired on fleeing customers. He wounded four people before igniting the paint thinner and shooting himself. Seven people died of smoke inhalation. The attack followed weeks of bitter demonstrations protesting plans of the Jew-

ish owner to evict a longtime black tenant.

These two events aptly symbolize the past year's dominant motif: racial polarization. Many of the prominent events of 1995 could serve as equally appropriate symbols. The racially diverse reactions to the O.J. Simpson verdict, Detective Mark Fuhrman racist spewings and the Million Man March all helped strengthen the perception that the race gap in America is widening.

Of course, one major story seemed to suggest otherwise. The widespread support that Ret. Gen. Colin Powell received among whites as he contemplated a presidential run seemed to indicate that an important new milestone had been reached in American race relations. But, in truth, Powell's non-candidacy spurred surprisingly little honest discussion about race. With affirmative action programs under fierce attack, few Powell supporters were willing to acknowledge that the general had risen to power with the help of

the military's special race-conscious programs. Without fair recognition of that fact, many read Powell's achievement as proof that race is no longer a significant deterrent to advancement in America. And that reading encouraged an even more dangerous line of reasoning: If Colin Powell could become chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, then what excuse did less successful blacks have for their condition?

It was a schizophrenic year for black Americans, who saw their role in 1995's racial drama defined by the good guy-bad guy tandem of Powell and Million Man March-convenor Louis Farrakhan. Ironically, both men share similar personal histories. They are children of Caribbean immigrants and grew up in working-class neighborhoods. With the obvious exception of Farrakhan's racial preoccupations, the two men's belief systems—which stress patriarchal "family values," an emphasis on self-reliance and a fondness for military discipline and uniforms—are also remarkably similar.

Thus, black progressives found 1995 to be a year of marking time. What else could it be, when the leader of the largest black demonstration in U.S. history finds such broad agreement with an African-American Republican icon? And the situation was not much different for white progressives, who watched the right-wing militia movement appropriate the last remnants of their populist rhetoric. The right's angry response to the actions of federal officials in Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho, for example, almost exactly echoed the left's reaction to the "neutralization" of the Black Panther Party and the infiltration of other leftist groups a generation earlier. The right's success in framing political debate has placed pro-

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Some progressives, sensing their precarious position, are urging the left's far-flung constituency of feminists, civil-rights advocates, gay-rights activists and others to abandon the politics of identity for the good of the commonweal. Identity politics not only imperils the notion of community by fetishizing difference, they argue, it also diverts energy and attention from more immediate causes that cry out for action. Todd Gitlin's new book, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked By Culture Wars* (Metropolitan Books), makes this argument most eloquently. "Instead of moving to organize against rock-bottom class inequalities and racial discrimination," Gitlin argues, "many activists [have chosen] to fight real and imagined symbols of insult." There is much to recommend that view.

In a fragmenting nation, the duty of progressives seems clear: halt the fragmentation. The logic of identity politics, and its multicultural offspring, seems to lead to chaos. If African-Americans can insist on Afrocentric

progressives in the odd position of defending a government they once attacked with abandon.

In many cases, progressives simply seem dumbfounded by the populist appeal of these hard-charging right-wingers. And so far, the American left has failed to offer a vision that can compete with the racially charged narrative that attracts individuals like James Burmeister and Malcolm Wright, the two neo-Nazi soldiers charged in the Fayetteville killings of Michael James and Jackie Burden.

curricula, for instance, what's to stop Lithuanian-Americans from demanding their own specific version of history? What about Korean-Americans? This cacophony of relativism would feed directly into the right's xenophobic agenda, progressives fear. Instead of uncritically celebrating the politics of difference, they argue, the left should be exploring ways to more effectively bridge those differences.

The tragedy at Freddy's Fashion Mart on 125th Street in Harlem is a potent example of identity politics gone awry.

For many weeks prior to the torching, demonstrators protested against Jewish owner Fred Harari, who wanted to expand his business by evicting the Record Shack, a popular black-owned store that carried music from all over the African diaspora.

The protesters viewed the conflict as part of a larger struggle against a conspiracy to restrict black businesses on the famous thoroughfare. As the dispute heated up, the use of anti-Semitic slurs became common among demonstrators, whose number included Roland Smith, the 51-year-old gunman. It may be inaccurate to make causal connections between that inflamed rhetoric and Smith's murderous arson, but it's hard to deny that one helped set the stage for the other.

African-American leadership has a stake in denouncing the racial scapegoating and casual anti-Semitism that have become common among some black activists. But the racial atmosphere has become so highly charged in recent years that any talk of conciliation or coalition seems almost traitorous. This, too, is a function of racial polarization. The call of the tribe is an alluring summons; it is especially compelling when there seem to be few other lines of defense. And in an era of largely uncontested conservative hegemony, other lines are dropping fast. How can black activists be persuaded to ignore racial distress signals when African-Americans are so clearly, and so desperately, in distress? The economic restructuring that has transformed the American workplace has particularly devastated black communities, most of which rely on industrial jobs that have all but vanished. Many black leaders are convinced that while this devastation may originate outside their communities, it can best be mitigated by internal efforts.

"The nationalist project aims to improve the lives of black Americans by concentrating the scarce resources of time, money and political will on reconstructing the institutions of black civil society," explains Eugene Rivers III, a fellow at the Center for the Study of Values and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School and a longtime community activist. Rivers' evolution from a 1960s integrationist to a 1990s nationalist exemplifies the spirit of the times: "The civil rights movement assumed the health of black communities and churches, and the integrationist approach to racial equity built upon them. But we can no longer make that assumption."

Mature nationalists of Rivers' stripe have concluded that integrationist strategies can only work when the targeted group has the cultural and economic wherewithal to compete equitably. "What does civil rights mean for a people psychologically debased by its own internalized racism?" he asks.

This rejection of civil rights methodology recalls the movement in the late 1960s that was led by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a group that occupied the youthful cutting edge of the civil rights movement. Chaired by Stokely Carmichael (now Kwame

Ture), SNCC adopted "Black Power" as its rallying cry and the civil rights movement was dealt a blow from which it has never recovered. The first action taken by Carmichael and his vice-chair, H. Rap Brown (now Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin), was to purge whites from SNCC, thus placing identity politics at the center of the black protest agenda. It's remained there ever since.

Although current media coverage of black nationalism tends to focus on Farrakhan's authoritarian brand, nationalism encompasses a wide variety of political strategies. The defunct Black Panther Party, for example, referred to themselves as "revolutionary nationalists" but aggressively sought coalitions with white activists ("mother country radicals") and other like-minded groups. Many members of today's resurgent nationalist movement have learned from the lessons of the 1960s. While stressing self-reliance, they were not opposed to forming alliances with others.

Some of this emerging activity is chronicled in a soon-to-be-published book entitled *Beyond Identity Politics: Emerging Social Justice Movements in Communities of Color* (South End Press). The book features essays about organizations that have successfully "merged some of the power and advances of identity politics with the immediate concerns of bread-and-butter organizing, often based on class." The book's editor, John Anner, who also edits *Third Force* magazine (in which the essays originally appeared), believes a merger of class and identity politics is the most important task in developing a new movement for social justice.

"Progressives have been hampered from creating such a movement, in part, because they've lacked the vocabulary for talking about how class and race intersect," Anner says. But several groups profiled in *Beyond Identity Politics* are directly addressing the problem. The Oakland, Calif.-based Center for Third World Organizing, which publishes *Third Force*, bills itself as being "located at the intersection of class and race." According to Anner, "There is a great deal of creative, militant and successful social justice organizing going on at the grass roots in communities of color. The fights are often small in scale, but they point the way to guiding a large movement. We need to let the world know that the lack of a massive social movement and the general despondency among left intellectuals in this country does not mean that regular people have given up struggling for justice and decent lives." Those struggles, he's found, are most successful when people are mobilized around specific, localized issues; such actions set the stage for workable coalitions and larger possibilities.

Anner acknowledges the limitations of identity politics. "Having failed in the beginning to figure out how to effectively merge identity politics with the class struggle, identity-based social movements have, to some extent, turned their backs on class." The result, he says, has been an unprecedented opening of opportunity for middle- and upper-class women and people of color "while the working

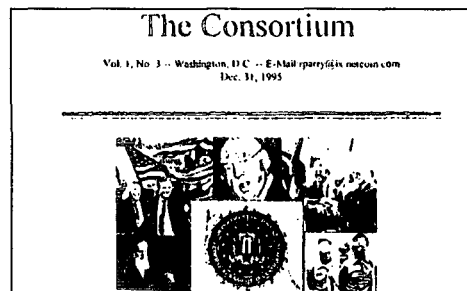
class and poor—finding that class trumps race after all—suffer increasing deprivation.”

But part of the reason that practitioners of identity politics have shunned the class-based politics of the traditional left is because so many old-line leftists have been hostile to their concerns. Many African-American activists were driven into the arms of chauvinistic nationalism by the European chauvinism of their putative allies. The progressive movement has been slow in deconstructing its own white supremacist tendencies. The *Village Voice's* recent examination of the progressive media, for example, revealed a wide disparity between the rhetoric of racial inclusion and the reality of employment.

Left activists also tend to downplay the special concerns with identity that slavery's legacy has thrust on African-Americans. The white supremacist biases of Western culture are active and debilitating sources of racial oppression but seldom are they targeted by progressives. In the salons of the left (the few that remain), there is still a residual notion that such cultural struggles are “superstructural.” But the search for cultural identity is more than just a middle-class campaign for personal affirmation, as it is often caricatured—though it can easily descend to that level. It is an essential identity quest for people crippled by 250 years of chattel slavery and 400 years of white supremacy. The exceptionalist nature of the slave experience has forced a peculiar mission on the descendants of enslaved Africans. Progressive whites must understand that before any meaningful coalitions can emerge.

Many white—and black—progressives saw Louis Farrakhan's leading role in the Million Man March as a sign that the event was irredeemably flawed. But they failed to understand that the vast majority of marchers weren't there to endorse Farrakhan's politics. Rather, they gathered to make a statement of hope, an expression of faith that African-Americans possess the strength to become the people they need to be. If that sense of agency is tempered with a realistic appraisal of the need to join with other groups around issues of mutual concern, then the crippling tendencies of identity politics can be overcome. Nationalism fills a powerful human hunger and has both progressive and reactionary potential. Progressive nationalists understand the importance of curtailing the scapegoating excesses that lately have tainted the movement. And the torching of Freddy's in Harlem easily could serve as a wake-up call to less progressive nationalists.

Indeed, there are many reasons to be hopeful. As *Beyond Identity Politics* reveals, leftists are finally forging strategies to counter right-wing influence, and progressive nationalists are a part of that struggle. As the disparity between rich and poor becomes wider the anti-democratic tendencies of the radical right will become more apparent. More and more Americans will begin searching for an alternative to the right's scorched-earth politics. For progressives, the time to develop that alternative is now. ◀



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SOUTH AFRICA

On the razor's edge

Cape Town municipal councilor Danile Landingwe still shakes his head in disbelief when he recalls how, strolling toward the inaugural session of South Africa's first nonracial parliament in 1994, he was eagerly hailed, then hugged, by the Afrikaaner policeman who had tortured him years earlier.

In apartheid's aftermath, the thorny work of establishing economic justice begins.

By Carole J.L. Collins
and Steve Askin
JOHANNESBURG

"He really got me," Landingwe, a burly eight-year veteran of Robben Island prison, recalls ruefully. "I didn't know what to say. He even embraced me—and he had beat the hell out of me!"

This unlikely embrace of former enemies evokes a key dilemma facing the New South Africa: how to achieve racial reconciliation without glossing over a history of crime and injustice. Because Landingwe lost so many friends to apartheid's

murder-torture apparatus, he doubts such encounters as that with his former jailer will ever feel comfortable.

After some initial hesitation, the government has moved to hold accountable some of the highest ranking apartheid-era criminals. (See "What price reconciliation?" on page 20.) In early December, it established a Truth Commission, to be headed by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to document such crimes and decide the basis for extending amnesty to offenders. As the appointments to the commission were announced, prosecutors for the first time brought murder charges against a group of security men with the former white minority government—including former Defense Minister Gen. Magnus Malan—for secretly setting up death squads to abet "black-on-black" violence in Kwazulu-Natal.

The government has also made great strides since the 1994 elections to lay the groundwork for a just democracy. "For the first time people feel they can have a say in the decisions of their government," says longtime anti-apartheid activist Rev. Beyers Naude. The new government has actively

solicited workers, women, youth and traditional leaders to submit their views on a new draft constitution, which is being widely reprinted in daily newspapers, before its final adoption in May. The constitution is the world's first to explicitly bar discrimination based on sexual orientation. Last June the Constitutional Court banned capital punishment as a violation of every person's "right to life and dignity" guaranteed by the new bill of rights.

Despite these rapid political advances, the violent legacy of apartheid rule remains. This past Christmas in Kwazulu-Natal, hundreds of knife-wielding Zulus linked to the Inkatha Freedom Party hacked or burned to death more than 130 villagers reportedly allied with the rival African National Congress (ANC).

Perhaps more troubling is another legacy of apartheid one doesn't usually read about: the violence of poverty, which destroys family life and undermines social peace and everyday neighborhood security as the poor and unemployed struggle to survive.

Nowhere is this explosive legacy of apartheid more clear than in the confrontation shaping up between the (still overwhelmingly white) "haves" and the (equally overwhelmingly black) "have-nots." For most South Africans there is no New South Africa when it comes time to seek shelter, feed a family or find a job. On average, whites still enjoy a Canadian-level living standard, according to a recent U.N. report, while blacks live on the level of Congo-Brazzaville, the world's 123rd-poorest nation. The 15 percent of the population that is white still owns 80 percent of the land. One

South African in six lacks housing, and the black unemployment rate is around 50 percent.

The government launched the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994, hoping to address urgent social needs more quickly and to speed the adoption of new budget priorities. But many complain that the program has been implemented too slowly and has so far failed to address fundamental injustices. Some observers, such as the Rev. Frank Chikane, the Pentecostal pastor who led the South African Council of Churches through its most embattled years of anti-apartheid activism and headed the Independent Election Commission, fear that the economic disparity may grow even wider.

Fr. Sean O'Leary, head of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) Justice and Peace Commission, lauds the RDP as "a blueprint for reconstruction with regard to education, health, land redistribution, and justice and peace work," but he argues that the government needs to get more serious about setting its priorities. "We have spent 30 billion Rand [almost \$9 billion] on education, yet 50 percent of our people are illiterate. We have doctors doing liver transplants, but people are showing up at clinics dying of malnutrition. We need to consider such things as taxes on wealth and land, [as well as] luxury VAT taxes."

The Mandela government has avoided any significant moves toward the redistribution of income and wealth desired by many of its supporters. This will come as a surprise to those in the West who caricatured the ANC as a tool of communist conspiracy. In fact, the ANC can scarcely be said to advance any single coherent set of economic policies. Some South African Communist Party (SACP) members serving in President Nelson Mandela's cabinet have come under fire for embracing capitalist economic policy all too eagerly and failing to articulate an alternative economic vision. (Indeed, Deputy Finance Minister Alex Erwin, an ANC stalwart who has worked with the labor movement and SACP, speaks of the need to make the tax system more efficient by lowering the top tax rate.)

Not so the 1.6 million-member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South Africa's largest labor federation, which boasts 20 members in the new parliament. Angered by the slow pace of economic reform, COSATU members called for a selective work stoppage December 19 (and another scheduled for January 16) to protest the government's failure to consult with labor before Deputy President Thabo Mbeki—South Africa's likely next president—announced plans to sell "non-strategic" state assets, including a number of transport and communications services.

The government quickly backed down and agreed to consult further with labor on the proposals. But COSATU has pressed for further concessions, demanding, for example, a moratorium on all privatization until the government grants unions a meaningful voice in restructuring. COSATU questioned the information on which the government had

based its privatization proposals, demanded fuller representation on a commission appointed to resolve the dispute and asked for more resources to allow labor to do more adequate research on the issue.

The debate over economic policy highlights the deep divisions within the ANC that have emerged with the party's rise to political power. Under apartheid, the broad, sometimes uneasy alliance of communists, trade unionists and community-based groups that comprised the ANC found unity in the ideal of nonracialism. When it became a legal political party, the ANC broadened further to include people of all classes and economic philosophies. The political makeup of Mandela's government of national unity (GNU) is broader still: Because South Africa's interim constitution guarantees the largest opposition parties seats in the cabinet, longtime ANC foe Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi serves as home affairs minister, while a member of the formerly pro-apartheid National Party heads the finance ministry.

Many longtime allies argue that the ANC was ill-prepared for such collaboration. Some trade unionists complain that the ANC government has failed to keep key strategic economic goals in focus and has largely ceded control of macroeconomic policy to the predominantly white business class. Mbeki has argued that privatization will make state enterprises more competitive, boosting demand for their products and services and eventually generating more jobs. Union leaders, however, maintain that Mbeki's policies are a prescription for further job losses.

But unions also admit that they have failed to formulate concrete alternatives. Part of the problem, says Bethuel Maserumule, a trade union researcher now with the Farm Workers Resource and Research Project, is that South African labor organizations "have no in-house research capacity. We always commission research [but] we don't ideologically control the results."

For his part, Chikane regards the task of constructing a more just, corruption-free economy as a major priority. For this reason, after the 1994 elections, he declined the urgings of Mandela and others to head the recently launched Truth Commission. He chose instead to enroll in a Harvard University master's program in public administration.

"I wanted to go where neoclassical economics was taught," says Chikane. "And the best place to go to learn about how the World Bank and IMF are thinking is Harvard. I studied all that hard stuff. We did structural adjustment programs, currency devaluations. I visited the World Bank and IMF on field trips. I am happy I did that course, because it got rid of many of the myths of economics."

Chikane says his own "comparative advantage lies in working on strategies of how to restructure the economy of this country to meet the needs of our people, and how to deliver what they need. Good will [alone] won't do it!" In South Africa, he notes, "rising growth [most] benefits those strategically well-placed in the economy"—who are still overwhelmingly white. Low public-sector salary structures,

in particular, demand review, not least because their inequity "encourages corruption as people look for ways to equalize their position." But if officials are paid high salaries, he adds, "we should see a change in the lives of ordinary people."

For Chikane, "it's important to make a difference in the life of my mother and elder brother. He's 48 years old, has little education and no training except as a bricklayer. He is a classic 'ordinary South African.' I will see serious change in this country if I see change in the life of my elder brother—not because he's related to me, but because the government has done something that makes a difference."

With a new president and parliament just now learning how to govern, it is too early to expect their work to bear full fruit. But South Africa's poor may not be willing to wait much longer for a better life. More and more of the country's black youth are wearying of the slow pace of change. "Our people are tired," one young man said at a meeting in Cape Town's Langa township. "When will a different future arrive for us?"

The ANC still commands great popular loyalty, says SACBC Secretary-General Fr. Buti Tlhagale, but "in five years, ordinary people may be as radical as the radical fringe today, because the government has told them they could be free but hasn't told them the limitations. People may be [protesting before] government offices, marching through the streets." Given this anger and the continuing violence in Kwazulu-Natal, "the future of the country is on a razor's edge," warns Archbishop Wilfrid Napier of Durban.

Chikane understands the dimensions of the task before the ANC government. "The time of history is now and we have to grapple with the challenges of the day, first by correcting the imbalances created by apartheid, and then by leveling the playing field," he says. "Even if we correct today's imbalances, unless it's a level playing field, we'll end up in the same situation [as before]. I believe that South

What price reconciliation?

South Africans—like Bosnians, Haitians, Rwandans and Salvadorans—are torn by the moral contradictions of coming to terms with their past. In some ways, the process of reconciliation in South Africa has been a remarkable success. But for many of apartheid's victims, the compromise that united supporters of the former whites-only government with pro-democracy forces in a Government of National Unity (GNU) was a bitter necessity, not an expression of good will.

The agreement did end decades of armed conflict, but at a price: Many in the GNU who played key roles in approving or carrying out apartheid crimes—including South African Vice President F.W. de Klerk—have escaped accountability, leading critics to question the prospects of achieving justice. "How can you pursue other [apartheid criminals] through the Truth Commission and yet exonerate [de Klerk]?" asks South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) Secretary-General Fr. Buti Tlhagale.

Failure to agree on how much justice can or should be traded away for reconciliation and peace is one of the biggest obstacles to resolving conflicts—especially when both sides lack any consensus on what constitutes a "crime" or whether one has been committed. Many South African whites still disbelieve evidence that the former white government assassinated many anti-apartheid activists.

In Rwanda, the genocide happened so quickly and the numbers of victims (more than 500,000) and of perpetrators (estimated by some to be as high as 200,000) were so large that any hope of documenting precise individual culpability—let alone bringing about some semblance of formal, legal "justice"—seems doomed.

In South Africa, formal justice is complicated by the eagerness to keep the fragile national unity government intact. Critics argue that South Africa's Truth Commission is too focused on amnesty. "We've made it too easy for the perpetrators," contends SACBC Justice and Peace Commission Director Fr. Sean O'Leary. "I don't see the value of the Truth Commission if it's not going to prosecute crimes," echoes Tlhagale. "What is the value of getting people to confess their sins, but they then pay no punishment, no price? Victims have to be compensated, at least nominally."

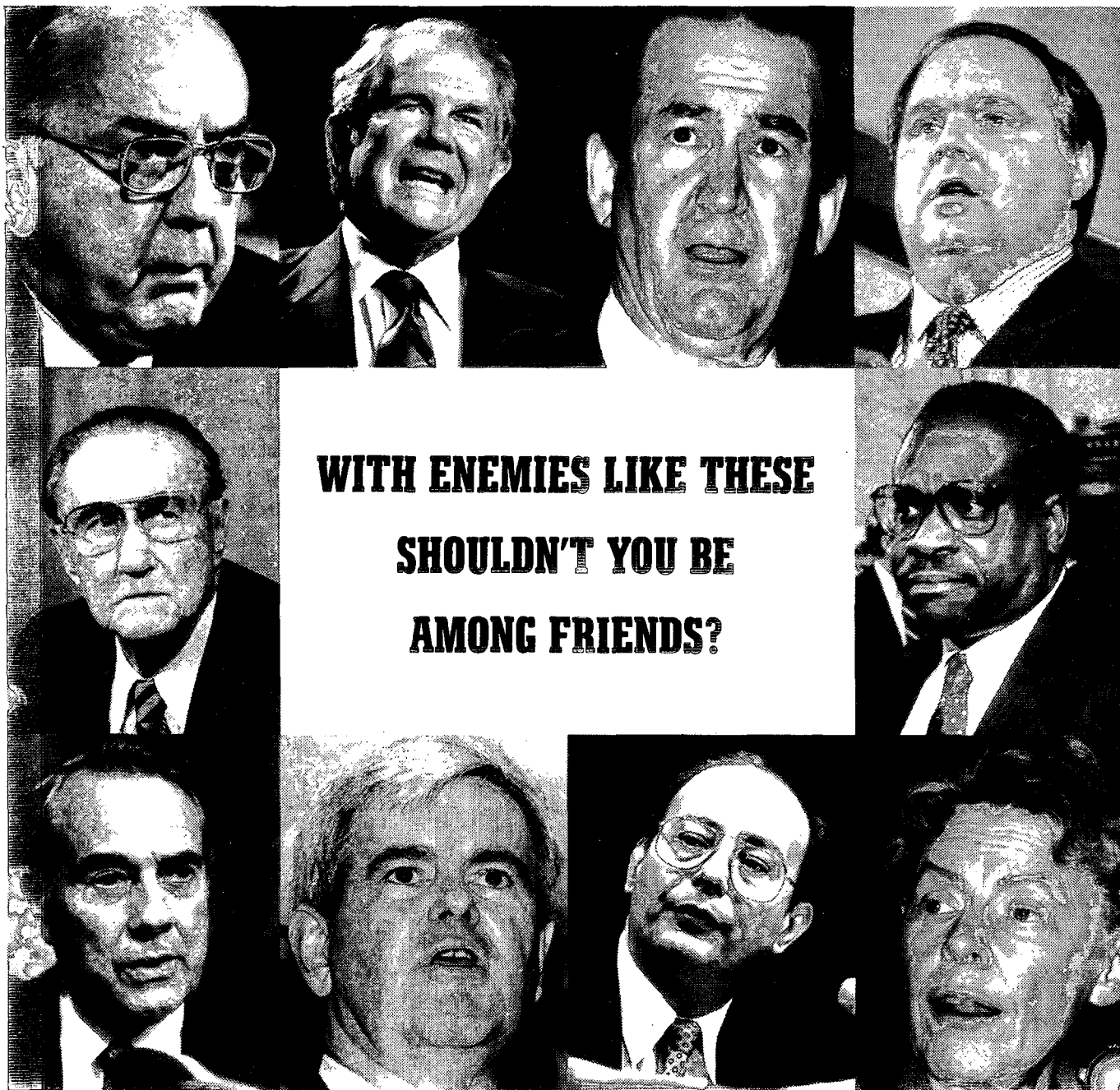
An additional dilemma is how to ensure refugee aid or efforts to reconcile opposing sides do not inadvertently reward or benefit an aggressor—or encourage the belief that one can oppress, even murder, people with impunity. The ugly reality in Zaire, according to a Goma-based relief agency staffer, is that "NGOs—and the UNHCR, too—are feeding intimidators and genocideurs" still largely unrepentant about their role in that genocide.

Many victims' cases may never be heard. As in Rwanda and Bosnia, the sheer volume of cases will create a fearsome backlog and, in all likelihood, a sort of judicial triage. "The Bikos, the Goniwes [families of two prominent activists murdered for their anti-apartheid activities], they'll get to the Truth Commission," says O'Leary. "But what about the people in the townships? They need restitution, perhaps from the side of the state. But it should be in the form of providing health care, free education or something similar. Not money. How do you put a value on human life?" —C. C. and S. A.

Africa represents the challenge of the century."

Can the government deliver? "Mandela can do the reconciliation," Chikane says. "Mandela has almost won the hearts and minds of the average whites. We need to leave Mandela to do these things. But let's prepare ourselves for the real change in the country."

Carole J.L. Collins is diplomatic correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*. Steve Askin, currently a labor movement researcher, wrote from southern Africa for *Business Week*, *In These Times* and other publications in the late 1980s.



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L A B O R

All quiet on the Midwestern front

*After two and
a half years
of spirited
defiance,
Decatur, Ill.'s
scrappiest
local union
bows to a
multinational.*

By David Moberg

It was a David and Goliath battle, but unlike the biblical tale, this time the giant won. For more than three years the 760 workers at the Decatur, Ill., factory of the A.E. Staley Co. had flung every rock they could at their employer, who had locked them out of their jobs since June 1993 over a contract dispute. During the fight, Staley workers had won admiration from trade unionists across the country and beyond for their tenacity and imagination.

Yet in the end, a majority of workers tired of the struggle, succumbed to financial pressures or despaired of inflicting serious wounds on Staley and its giant multinational owner, British-based Tate & Lyle. On December 22, a few days after ousting the president and several of his allies in favor of a rival group that simply wanted to end the conflict, 56 per-

cent of the local union members voted to accept a company contract proposal that both union factions described as a defeat.

The decision brought an end to the last of three labor battles that have wracked the small city of Decatur for four years. A strike at Bridgestone/Firestone was broken last May, and a walkout at Caterpillar ended in early December. The Staley workers had started on a high note of remarkable rank-and-file activity and solidarity but ended in a painful morass of division and recriminations.

"The war of attrition began to take its toll," reflects ousted president David Watts. "The solidarity that was once the best in the country soon became divided. It was a wholesale win for the company." Watts harshly criticized the leaders of the United Paperworkers International Union for failing to adequately support the local.

Workers at the long-established Staley factory, which makes corn syrup, had cooperated closely with management during the 1980s to improve operations. Then in 1991

management turned on the workers, demanding new 12-hour shifts rotating between days and nights, further drastic job cuts, an unrestricted company right to subcontract work and the elimination of many seniority rights and grievance protections.

Rather than strike and face permanent replacement by strikebreakers, the Staley local hired consultant Ray Rogers to develop a corporate campaign. Rogers inspired workers, brought public attention, raised money, helped mobilize support groups and rallies, and attacked the ties of local banks to Staley, forcing the resignation of two directors. But he also devoted much effort to a futile quest to embroil State Farm Insurance Co. in the conflict, despite its remote financial ties to Staley. Though Rogers began organizing transnational solidarity, he also provoked resentment by trampling on international union protocol.

With advice from Jerry Tucker, who led the UAW New Directions movement, the local also initiated an "inside campaign." Union members did only what company rules required while demonstrating solidarity inside the plant. The inside campaign drastically cut production, and Staley retaliated by locking out workers.

Though the local organized mass demonstrations and fought Staley on other fronts, from backing pro-labor local politicians to blocking state tax breaks for the company, it primarily focused on getting customers to drop their contracts with Staley. They succeeded with Miller Brewing Co., and had mounted a major campaign against PepsiCo, Staley's largest customer. A Decatur delegation to the AFL-CIO winter executive council meeting last February embarrassed national labor leaders into taking the Decatur struggles seriously, and the new AFL-CIO leadership pledged in October



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Decatur police spray pepper gas on workers protesting the first anniversary of the Staley lockout, June 25, 1994.

was unrealistically rigid in its bargaining, Tucker insists that leaders of the local were flexible on many points despite their commitment to principles. Yet there was a growing movement within the local, led by former bargaining chairman James Shinall, to end the lockout on any terms. Backers of ousted president Watts insist that Shinall had support from regional representatives of the Paperworkers, who had much earlier written off the struggle as lost and had played no role in the local union's remarkable public campaigns. Shinall's group forced a vote on a company offer last summer, but a narrow majority rejected that proposal.

Then, last fall, Paperworkers Vice President Glenn Goss took over negotiations. In early December union bargainers accepted the company's last offer as the framework for discussion. They won minor improvements on several points but no change in the fundamental corporate demands, such as unrestricted subcontracting and the denial of amnesty to seven discharged workers. The company offered returning workers only 349 jobs, a number likely to be cut within a few years to about 210, even though at least another 150

to put more muscle behind the Pepsi campaign.

Though some critics say the local

jobs will be filled by subcontractor employees. For many workers who had given up, the company's modest severance pay offer was critical in buying their vote.

On December 12, Shinall defeated Watts. The next day the company delivered its new contract offer, which Watts had kept quiet to avoid influencing the election. The union executive board—with the Watts faction still in office—considered the new proposal too similar to an offer spurned last summer and rejected it unanimously. The board also voted 6-2 against taking it to the members. The Paperworkers international, however, ordered a vote. The international didn't endorse the contract, which includes provisions such as 12-hour shifts that violate union policy, but some officials spoke favorably about the deal, reinforcing Staley's argument that this was the best contract workers would ever get.

Shortly after members ratified the contract on December 22, Shinall announced that he would take the severance package, resign from his new union office and continue his job at a nonunion trucking firm. Several other union officers (including Watts) and key rank-and-file militants are also taking the severance pay rather than return to work under the contract. Staley is demanding that all workers who return or accept the severance package drop all past grievances and forgo any future legal actions or protests against the company.

Could the Staley workers have won? "This was winnable from day one," asserts Mike Griffin, one of the most militant leaders of the local's Campaign for Justice. "It could have been won in the first year if the international and the AFL-CIO had done their jobs." Dick Blin, editor of *The Paperworker*, the international union newspaper, argues, "We had their customers on the run. Pepsi was close to pulling the plug [on its Staley contract] last spring." Tucker believes Pepsi could have been forced to drop its contract if the union had more aggressively mobilized civil rights groups and other labor allies.

But other observers were less hopeful. Even Joseph Uehlein, an official in the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department and an advocate of early, aggressive "strategic action" campaigns, concludes: "I didn't see a path to greater victory. I think the union needed to settle, and the families needed to get back to work or get their buyouts."

Tate & Lyle always had an edge in the fight. It's a \$5 billion company with holdings in many countries. Though Staley accounts for about 40 percent of the firm's profits, the locked-out workers hardly dented company earnings. Some other Staley plants were organized in other unions, but they had capitulated earlier to company demands and operated throughout the lockout under terms much like those the company had obtained in Decatur. Until the Decatur conflict, there had been little coordination among Staley unions. Clearly, persuading companies like Pepsi to end their contracts represented one of the local's few chances to hurt Staley's pocketbook.

"The business of collective bargaining is about power," says Mark Brooks, the Paperworkers' director of special projects. "There's always more we can do to organize workers' power, but we face very powerful enemies. I know we gave it our complete effort, and in the end forced the company to begin moving at the bargaining table for the first time in three years. We'll never know if it might have been possible to do more."

Yet the Decatur militants argue that the Paperworkers were holding back, never putting the maximum effort behind their struggle. Disgruntled workers charge that some leaders even undermined the local's efforts. "The development of the surrender crowd was not organic," argues Tucker. "It began

with the explicit help of the international staff." Shinall says the international had been "respectful" to him in conversations ever since the merger of the Staley local's old union—the Allied Industrial Workers—into the Paperworkers two years ago. Shinall once thought the corporate campaign would work but lost hope after six months. Though he praises the Paperworkers, he observes, "When you're in a battle like this, you never get enough help."

Division within the local union encouraged both Staley and Pepsi to hold out, which fueled both workers' despair and pressure for Paperworkers officers to end the dispute. "I have very clear indications that [the international leaders] were at a point where they wanted this over," says Allain "Dike" Ferris, the bargaining committee chairman.

At the AFL-CIO convention, newly elected President John Sweeney pledged to put the federation behind the Staley workers, but the task force he appointed had little time to work. It helped organize some leafleting support, planned a pop-bottle mail-in protest to Pepsi and set up a pair of private meetings, one between Sweeney and Tate & Lyle CEO Sir Neil Shaw, and another between AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and a Pepsi director.

In the end there were tensions among the different levels of union operations. The Paperworkers feared legal complications might arise out of a big protest planned at Pepsi headquarters and instead favored a series of smaller actions. Decatur militants were upset that the AFL-CIO task force worked through international officials they did not trust, but the task force felt obliged to respect the wishes of the top union officials.

The AFL-CIO and international unions need to recognize the value for the labor movement of uniting behind groups of workers, like those at Staley, when they show such spirit. High-level cooperation is key to creating the solidarity Staley workers needed—and did not always get—from other unions. But labor's leaders must also be willing to push the boundaries of unfair laws, such as the restrictions on secondary boycotts and mutual support among workers, risking civil disobedience and legal penalties to challenge both employers and the laws.

Clearly, the new AFL-CIO leadership also needs to develop an organizational structure, both nationally and internationally, that can respond more swiftly and surely in cases like Decatur. (According to Uehlein, Sweeney has appointed a task force to discuss such a move.) Though the Staley workers planned their strategy admirably, they would have benefited from earlier strategic ties with other unions, especially those in their industry.

"I'm convinced the labor movement missed a threshold opportunity here to win a struggle that could have been won and also to demonstrate their ability to step past the parochial nature of internal relationships," argues Tucker. If the labor movement wants to be a new voice for American workers, then it is going to have to find a way to turn more of the efforts by determined workers like those at Staley into real victories. ◀

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IRAQ GATE

Shell game

How U.S. companies stoked the buildup of Saddam Hussein's war machine—and why American citizens still haven't heard the full story.

By Peter Mantius.

In the cavernous sheet-metal warehouse that served as temporary barracks for 127 Americans in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, three soldiers had cornered a mouse. Army Specialist Vaughan Leer rolled off his bunk and—delaying a visit to the outdoor latrine—groggily paused a moment to watch them make the capture.

It was 8:42 p.m. on February 25, 1991, and Leer had guard duty at midnight.

As he turned to go outside to relieve himself, the building suddenly fell into

absolute blackness, followed in an instant by a blinding blue flash. An Iraqi Scud missile had pierced the thin metal roof and dropped 20 feet to the floor before exploding. The blast killed 28 soldiers and wounded 99 others from several units. For the United States, it was the most damaging incident in the Persian Gulf War.

Leer suffered perforated eardrums and shrapnel wounds to his throat and left side. The missile decimated Leer's unit, the 14th Quartermaster Detachment from Greensburg, Pa., 25 miles east of Pittsburgh. Of its 69 members, 13 died and 43 were wounded.

Long after his physical wounds had healed and he'd left the Army to study environmental engineering, Leer could not shake off memories of the tragedy. His lingering trauma was aggravated by disclosures that American companies—encouraged by the U.S. government and financed by a tiny Atlanta bank—were among Iraq's most valued military suppliers just before the war.

In the years leading up to the Persian Gulf War, a Fortune 500 corporation based only a few miles from the 14th Quartermaster's headquarters secretly sold the Iraqis machine-tool parts used to manufacture armaments. But that company, Kennametal Inc. of Latrobe, Pa., wasn't alone. Before the August 1990 Iraqi invasion, a host of U.S. firms cashed in as suppliers to the Iraqi war machine. The flow of weapons to Saddam Hussein started in the early 1980s, when the White House quietly began helping Iraq fight its war against fundamentalist Iran. While officially neutral in that grisly struggle, the United States handed Iraq top-secret satellite photos of Iranian troop positions, suspended rules governing exports of highly sensitive military gear, placed \$5 billion of taxpayer funds at risk to support Iraqi food imports and overlooked an illegal banking scheme at the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro office in Atlanta that sent additional billions directly into Saddam Hussein's war chest.

The White House has run similar games before—and

In the months before the 1992 election, President George Bush was dogged by allegations that both he and Ronald Reagan had secretly provided support to Iraq throughout the 1980s—and right up to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. That invasion triggered congressional investigations that dug deep into the covert U.S. tilt toward Iraq. But many reporters lost interest in Iraqgate just after the '92 election, when the Bush Justice Department completed an internal probe clearing the two GOP administrations of any wrongdoing. For years, the Iraqgate charges languished in obscurity. And when the Clinton administration released a report last January that declared its Republican predecessors clean, the story effectively disappeared from public view. But a new book by Atlanta Journal-Constitution reporter Peter Mantius raises troubling questions about the thoroughness of both the Clinton and Bush probes. In Shell Game, Mantius provides the most complete account yet of the United States' off-the-books relationship with Saddam Hussein. The following excerpt from Shell Game contains some of the book's most explosive findings.

since—outside the purview of congressional and public approval, in bids to influence foreign tyrants and to profit from them. Secret dalliances with the likes of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and Manuel Noriega in Panama all display the same pattern: Public money is secretly channeled to fund a questionable foreign policy. The history of American involvement with Iraq is a cautionary tale of how our executive branch, working hand in hand with private business, ran an “off-the-books” foreign policy—a policy that would never be approved through public channels.

Christopher Drogoul was Saddam’s principal banker in the West. He worked out of an obscure office tucked away on the 20th floor of a Peachtree Center tower in downtown Atlanta. His employer, Italy’s huge Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), was a far-flung bank that had a history of sticking its tentacles into international arms deals. BNL was owned almost exclusively by the Italian government. Drogoul was the bank’s Atlanta branch manager.

When the Iraqis first approached the Atlanta banker in late 1984, Drogoul eagerly agreed to make loans to help them import wheat, rice and other foodstuffs. At the time, Iraq was fighting for its very survival against neighboring Iran. To the U.S. government, Iraq was clearly the lesser of two evils. Under the Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran had radicalized to the point where its government was completely antithetical to U.S. political and business interests. Iraq, by contrast, though troublesome itself, gained official, albeit low-key, U.S. backing. Most of BNL-Atlanta’s agricultural credits to Iraq were guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The arrangement seemed to please everybody. Iraq got its food. BNL-Atlanta had a major customer—one that borrowed \$1.9 billion. U.S. farmers had a lucrative new market. The U.S. and Italian governments were nourishing Iran’s bitter enemy.

In 1989, after the Iran-Iraq war had ended, the Bush administration discreetly edged even closer to Saddam Hussein. The strategic need to create a military counterweight to Iran had receded, but the commercial impulse to chase profit had taken its place. General Motors longed to sell Saddam more cars and trucks; Continental Grain and Cargill wanted to ship more wheat; Mobil wanted to buy more cheap oil. They weren’t alone. The U.S.-Iraq Business Forum, a powerful business lobby based in Bush’s second home of Houston, sprang up to extol the benefits of trade with Saddam.

Although many companies began increasing their trade with Iraq, BNL-Atlanta’s dealings with Saddam Hussein came to a close in August 1989. By then, Drogoul had made a series of illegal loans to Iraq, and FBI agents—tipped off to BNL’s questionable lending by a bank employee—raided its Peachtree Center offices. Intrigued by a *Wall Street Journal* story about the BNL affair, Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-TX), chairman of the House Banking Committee, directed a keen young staff investigator named Dennis Kane to check it out

in July 1990. If the probe seemed mundane at first, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in early August of 1990 instantly made it a top priority. The Bush administration’s touchy response to questions about BNL only further incited the 74-year-old Gonzalez. He scheduled a Banking Committee hearing on the matter for October.

That plan drew immediate fire from Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. “As you should be aware,” Thornburgh wrote Gonzalez on September 26, “this is a sensitive case with national security concerns. ... [A] decision to proceed with these interviews and the hearing at this time significantly diminishes the department’s ability to successfully prosecute this matter.” Gonzalez snapped back that he was distressed about Thornburgh’s “apparent lack of understanding of the investigative and legislative functions of the Congress.”

In early 1991, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Fed, refused to give Gonzalez a report by the Bank of Italy on BNL’s Atlanta branch on the grounds that Italy considered it “highly confidential.” The Justice Department withheld thousands of BNL-related documents from Congress on the basis of “grand jury secrecy rules.” Everyone, it seemed, had a good reason why Congress shouldn’t be informed.

Even so, Gonzalez and Kane managed to gather enough documentation to establish the secret flow of credit, technology and even satellite intelligence data from the United States to Iraq before the war.

As weeks passed, White House officials grew concerned. Gonzalez’s persistence was disquieting. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft was being asked to turn over National Security Directive 26, President Bush’s secret order from October 1989 that called for closer commercial relations with Iraq. There were hundreds of other embarrassing papers Gonzalez wanted to get his hands on. Even worse, other congressmen, including Charlie Rose (D-NC) and Sam Gejdenson (D-CT), both of whom chaired congressional subcommittees, were also beginning to demand documents on prewar dealings with Iraq. Bush administration lawyers swung into action.

On April 8, 1991, Nicholas Rostow, special adviser to the president and chief legal counsel for the National Security Council (NSC), met with senior administration lawyers to talk about how to handle congressional requests. It was the first of at least eight such meetings Rostow either ran or attended over the next several weeks. Ostensibly, the purpose of the meetings was to coordinate the release of information, to set ground rules. But notes by those who attended suggest that discussions sometimes turned to legal strategies for withholding information.

After analyzing hundreds of items, Gonzalez and Kane became convinced that many had been classified for reasons that had nothing to do with national security. The congressman addressed the problem with characteristic aggressiveness. When he came across an important nugget, he simply mentioned it in a floor speech, or even placed the sensitive

document itself in the *Congressional Record*. The Bush administration was furious. In May 1992, Thornburgh's successor, Attorney General William Barr, threatened to stop giving Gonzalez any more classified documents if he kept passing them on to the public. Gonzalez replied that everything he placed in the record discussed "past policies, not ongoing policies or operations." He insisted that the Republicans were raising a red herring. According to Gonzalez, they were the real abusers of the classification system when they used the "secret" stamp to hide politically embarrassing information.

As the battle over intelligence documents heated up in 1992, Gonzalez picked up an unlikely ally in the media. William Safire, the former speechwriter for Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew, used his column in the *New York Times* to present Gonzalez's theories to a national audience. "The Democrats have their election-year Watergate," Safire proclaimed on April 28, 1992. "But only Henry Gonzalez of San Antonio understands it." Pretty soon, other Democrats began to check it out.

Safire later trained his attention on the Justice Department and Attorney General Barr, after Barr turned down a request by Congress for a court-appointed independent counsel in the case. Safire wrote that Barr's explanation for his decision "will be Exhibit A in a future prosecution of obstruction of justice."

In October, congressional Democrats again pressured Barr to call for an independent counsel. This time, Gonzalez was back with reinforcements, including Sen. David Boren (D-OK), chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence. Barr was in a corner. With the presidential election only three weeks away, he didn't want to fan the flames of those charging cover-up. But Barr preferred to avoid letting a three-judge panel pick an independent counsel. He claimed to be philosophically opposed to such investigations. So on October 16, he chose his own man, retired Federal Judge Frederick Lacey of New Jersey, to determine whether it was appropriate for the court to appoint an independent counsel.

Gonzalez and company didn't buy it. They felt Lacey wouldn't be independent of the Justice Department, and called his appointment a stalling tactic. As long as Lacey investigated, Barr was relieved of pressure to ask a court to make an appointment. The Democrats accused the Republicans of trying to run out the clock before the election. A few

days after Lacey launched his probe, the BNL case in Atlanta seemed to vanish from the headlines.

The week of the election, internal orders to round up wayward BNL documents within the Justice Department came from two sources. The first originated with Deputy Attorney General George J. Terwilliger III. His memo to department heads on election day, November 3, 1992, said he was collecting papers at Judge Lacey's request. The other request for sensitive internal documents came from a man who had quit the department more than a year earlier—Richard Thornburgh.

When he resigned in August 1991, Thornburgh carted off 156 boxes of documents said to be "personal and nonrecord" in nature. One year later, Thornburgh requested an additional 102 boxes of papers and two boxes of microfilm for his private storage facility in Pittsburgh. According to the General Accounting Office, the September 1992 request was for original documents in several of the department's most sensitive cases.

Justice Department employees decided that in most cases Thornburgh should receive copies rather than the originals he'd

requested. But some originals—enough to fill an estimated 11 boxes—were released in December 1992 and January 1993. In the laborious copying process FBI and Justice employees gave up trying to screen all surrendered documents for those marked "sensitive." The GAO later spot-checked what Thornburgh's staff had carried away. Among other files, it found papers on Iran-Contra and Inslaw, the Washington computer firm that claimed the Reagan Justice Department had stolen its proprietary software.

Nancy Wilson, custodian of Thornburgh's papers, acknowledged that BNL documents were included. "There's hardly anything on [BNL]," Wilson insisted. "Anything he would have had would have been newspaper articles, not the file of the case."

Lacey personally interviewed Thornburgh as part of his BNL investigation. But his report did not mention the former attorney general's highly unusual post-election document hunt—one that may have competed with Lacey's own.

Toward the end of his grueling seven-week project, Lacey became exhausted. He skipped sleep the night of Tuesday, December 8 to finish his report for Barr. At his press conference in Washington the following day, he was irritable, defensive and patronizing. "At this point," Lacey told the



assembled media, "I know more about this case than anyone else in the United States.

"I tell you this, and I will tell the Congress this: Many decent people have had their careers tarnished and their reputations stained by being charged with being corrupt, being part of a 'cover-up.' These are baseless charges. And you have been taken in by them."

Barr immediately seized on Lacey's recommendation and rejected for a second time the congressional request for a court-appointed independent counsel. Lacey had produced a two-part report. The first section, which was released to the public, concluded that federal prosecutors had performed admirably. The second section dealt with intelligence matters and wasn't released to anyone who didn't possess a "Top Secret: Codeword" clearance. That classification is reserved for secrets of grave national importance. (A heavily redacted version of Part II was later declassified.)

When asked, Lacey said he hadn't explored whether the CIA knew about BNL-Atlanta's lending to Iraq before the FBI searched its offices in August 1989. Neither did he mention BNL's ongoing legal dispute with Lloyd's of London, which happened to be employing as its general counsel in the United States Lacey's law firm, LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby & MacRae. Lloyd's had insured BNL against losses of up to \$5 million due to errors and omissions by officers of its Atlanta branch in late 1988. When BNL submitted a claim after the FBI raid, the British insurance giant refused to pay on grounds that BNL-Rome knew about Drogoul's Iraqi lending schemes.

Lacey said he didn't know during his investigation of BNL in 1992 that the bank was in the middle of a multimillion-dollar disagreement with Lloyd's—the company his own law firm was representing in other matters at the time. He said he wasn't aware of the legal proceedings between BNL and Lloyd's until it was pointed out to him by a reporter in 1995. Given Lacey's claim that he knew more than anyone in the country about the BNL affair, his ignorance of the bank's disagreements with Lloyd's seems remarkable. LeBoeuf's chairman, Donald J. Greene, had urged Lacey to take on the BNL probe, and as many as 25 LeBoeuf employees helped him carry it out.

Many observers of the BNL case had high hopes that Bill Clinton would crack Iraqgate wide open. On the campaign trail in September 1992, Al Gore, Clinton's running mate, drew an elaborate metaphor to describe President Bush's role in the affair. "George Bush wants the American people to see him as the hero who put out a raging fire," Gore said, referring to Operation Desert Storm. "But new evidence now shows that he is the one who set the fire. He not only struck the match, he poured gasoline on the flames. So give him credit for calling the fire department, but understand who started the blaze."

Although Clinton the candidate never confronted Bush so squarely on the issue, he did endorse the idea of a court-appointed independent counsel for the case. Once elected,

however, Clinton and Gore didn't seize the initiative as many had hoped. Meanwhile, Congressman Henry Gonzalez had begun to slow down as chief Iraqgate critic. Like a heavyweight boxer laboring in the final rounds of a tough fight, his flurries of outrage about BNL were separated by longer and longer periods of silence. By late 1994, Clinton had yet to fully deliver on his earlier pledge to "declassify and disclose to the public" documents on Bush's policy toward Iraq. Perhaps even more surprisingly, Gonzalez failed to produce a long-promised summary report on his BNL findings.

With Gonzalez out of the picture, the job of wrapping up the Iraqgate affair fell to John Hogan, the Justice Department official assigned by Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the matter. His final report, completed in October 1994, was declassified and released to the public in January 1995. Hogan wrote that further efforts to develop new indictments in the affair would be a waste of time. He found nothing to support the broad conspiracy allegations that our government worked illegally with Italy and others to arm Iraq. According to Hogan, the White House consistently turned down proposals to sell arms to Iraq in the 1980s. And the CIA and NSC "informed us that no covert actions pursuant to a 'national security directive' were undertaken." He made no reference to the September 1989 Defense Intelligence Agency report that described a NATO-coordinated "BNL mechanism" and "arms trading to Iraq which occurred illegally as part of the cover trading of agricultural and non-sensitive products."

As for persistent charges that Iraq bartered food shipped from the U.S. under Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) guarantees, Hogan saw nothing illegal. He made no claim of having tracked a single shipment of CCC commodities to its final destination—in Iraq or anywhere else. But he said he really didn't need to, given that it wasn't against U.S. law for a receiver of CCC commodities to barter or sell them. Even so, Hogan's task force probed the bartering reports and uncovered cases in which Iraq did in fact swap food for weapons. Hogan said he wasn't able to establish that the food originated in the United States or that it was shipped under financing arrangements with the CCC. Because Hogan argued that BNL-Rome did not direct or even know

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about Christopher Drogoul's loan scheme in Atlanta, his report cleared the way for the Clinton Justice Department to let BNL collect \$400 million on its CCC loan guarantees. Hogan also investigated reports that two planned weapons sales to Iraq—one for "Supergun" components, the other for Argentinean tanks—depended on U.S. Department of Agriculture financing. But he said he wasn't able to confirm the substance of either story.

In conclusion, Hogan praised his employer. "I have found no evidence of corruption or incompetence in the conduct of the [BNL and Iraq] investigation," he wrote. "On the contrary, the work of the [Justice] Department and other agencies has by and large been thorough, persistent and careful."

Hogan said the BNL task force also benefited from the CIA's "extensive cooperation." But he added an odd disclaimer. He admitted that he was not confident the agency had turned over all relevant documents. He wasn't suggesting that anything was willfully withheld. Rather, he attributed the suspected information gap to the CIA's limited ability to retrieve reports from its compartmentalized records system. "In the course of our work," Hogan wrote, "we learned of 'sensitive compartments' of information not normally retrievable and of specialized offices that previously were unknown to the CIA personnel who were assisting us. In one instance, it took the CIA two months to identify the intended recipient country of weapons shipped at the CIA's request." Hogan presumed that the documents he wasn't allowed to see wouldn't have had much impact on his investigation.

But Hogan's report wasn't the final word on Iraqgate. In late January 1995, Howard Teicher, a senior member of President Reagan's NSC staff, filed a sworn affidavit in a Miami criminal case that raised new questions about the thoroughness of the Hogan inquiry. (See "The company they keep," March 6, 1995.) Teicher gave his statement at the request of defense attorneys for Teledyne, Inc., a U.S. firm that had been charged by the government in 1993 of supplying zirconium for Iraqi cluster bombs. Those bombs had been shipped to Iraq by Chilean arms dealer Carlos Cardoen, a co-defendant in the case.

Teledyne had tried to dissuade the Justice Department from issuing the indictment on the grounds that the zirconium exports were part of a secret U.S. foreign policy. The company's lawyers pointed to State Department telexes from the middle 1980s that explicitly referred to Cardoen's cluster bomb business with Iraq. In his affidavit, Teicher stated that he sat in on meetings in 1982 at which CIA Director William Casey described cluster bombs as perfect "force multipliers" that would allow Iraq to stop "human waves" of Iranian attackers. Teicher said Casey was committed to helping Cardoen supply them. In 1983, Teicher added, Casey intervened with the State and Commerce Departments to see to it that licensing restrictions did not interrupt the flow of Cardoen cluster bombs to Iraq.

Teicher also said President Reagan signed a secret national security directive on Iraq in 1982. According to Teicher, the directive itself—even its number—was still classified. He knew about it, he said, because he had helped draft it. The nature of the aid contemplated by the directive included "making sure Iraq had the military weaponry [it] required" through legal means, the affidavit stated. Within a week, his affidavit was sealed and classified.

When Teledyne's lawyers sought to buttress their defense with classified documents, the prosecution resisted, saying: "In some cases a balance must be struck between a defendant's need for exculpatory classified information and the public interest in preserving its secrecy."

Paul Henderson, the top man at an Iraqi weapons-buying front company in England, knew that argument well. Four British ministers had used it against him during his 1992 trial in London. Before the Gulf War, the British government had winked at Henderson's exporting activity—which was funded by BNL in Atlanta—in order to keep tabs on Iraqi arms purchases. But when war broke out, Henderson's government cut and ran. Great Britain denied it had tolerated export violations and remained mum on the fact that it had used Henderson as a spy, leaving him exposed to a potential lengthy prison sentence.

Although Henderson's government had documents exonerating him, the four ministers signed "public interest immunity" certificates to keep them sealed. A British judge was asked to help hide the smoking gun. When he refused, hundreds of previously secret documents that backed up Henderson's story were released. The British government abruptly folded up its prosecution, and a profound hypocrisy was exposed. There was no "public interest" at stake in preserving secrecy, only political reputation.

But Teledyne failed to gain access to classified U.S. documents, and in January 1995 pleaded guilty to export violations, agreeing to pay a \$13 million fine. After settling its case, the company issued a statement. The U.S. government, Teledyne said, had "possessed knowledge and the administrative mechanisms to prevent the shipments but failed to do so."

"While this does not excuse the later lapses by the company's operating division, criminal prosecution seems inappropriate in such circumstances."

Inappropriate, perhaps. But in a court that enforces a tight lid on classified documents, sustainable. So the extent of government "complicity" in illegal acts in support of Iraq lies just beyond the reach of legal discovery, both for defendants in criminal cases and for the American public at large.

Peter Mantius is a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. This article is excerpted from *Shell Game: A True Story of Greed, Power, International Banking and Clandestine Politics*. Copyright © 1995 by Peter Mantius. Reprinted by permission from St. Martin's Press.

I N T H E A R T S

Pistol-packin' mama

W

affling courts, bungling cops, intrusive gun-control laws—what's a mother to do when they stand in the way of rough justice? Get a gun, that's what, and blow the remorseless criminal who haunts your dreams to kingdom come.

***Sally Field
blows away
reality in
An Eye for
an Eye.***

By David Armstrong

Such is the American fantasy of revenge, the American infatuation with instant and simple solutions—and the driving impulse behind a growing subgenre of American films. The latest entry is *Eye for an Eye*, starring Sally Field as the gun-toting mother of a murdered child who takes the law into her hands and gets away with it.

The movie is noteworthy chiefly for the high-profile acting and directing talent languishing within its frames—and for a few more disturbing changes it introduces in the pathological pursuit of revenge on screen.

The revenge movie is not

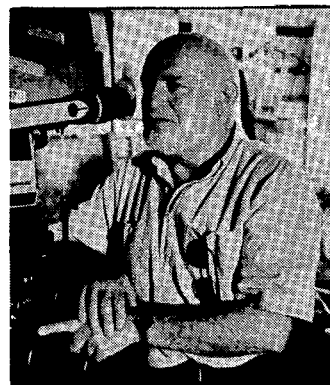
new, of course. Charles Bronson and Clint Eastwood forged careers out of playing homicidal maniacs hell-bent on, um, justice. Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger play cartoonish versions of the same character. Michael Douglas cleaned up Los Angeles when his irate engineer in *Falling Down* stepped out from behind his pocket protector to become a killing machine.

What is new—and this is Hollywood's, shall we say, unique take on feminism—is that these days sisters are doing it for themselves. Annabella Sciorra's decent housefrau whacked Rebecca De Mornay's vile nanny in *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*; and Meryl Streep dispatched white-trash bankrobber Kevin Bacon with preppy aplomb in *The River Wild*. Now even wholesome Sally Field is getting into the act. What's more, some of Hollywood's brightest talent is joining her in a subgenre once reserved for career bottom-feeders. *Eye for an Eye* is as much a symptom as a movie.

The cast of *Eye for an Eye* includes Ed Harris as Field's ineffectual husband, Beverly D'Angelo as her clueless best friend and Joe Mantegna as an inept police detective. All are strong actors who have been fine in other films. The director is John Schlesinger, who helmed important work such as *Midnight Cowboy*, *Billy Liar* and the delicate chamber piece *An Englishman Abroad*.

But *An Eye for an Eye*, befitting the national mood, is about as delicate as a snub-nosed .45 jammed in the ribs. Field plays Karen McCann, an upper-middle-class L.A. mother of two. In a nod to feminism, she is a career woman, though we never see her actually working, just huddling with office colleagues when tragedy strikes. In a scene of graphic and sickening brutality, Karen's oldest child, 19-year-old Julie, is raped and murdered in her own home by a tattooed sociopath named Robert Doob (Kiefer Sutherland).

Doob symbolizes a justice system that in pop culture and political discourse is reputed to have completely lost its moorings. He is arrested shortly after the crime. But wouldn't you know, the judge lets him walk on a technicality due to sloppy police work, à la the O.J. Simpson trial. *Eye for an Eye* holds the same sort of disdain for namby-pamby law enforcement officials that right-wing populists usually reserve for politi-



Eye for an Eye
Directed by
John Schlesinger

cians. The film's rhetorical high point has Field's character snarling "Fuck you!" to Mantegna's police detective.

Karen is another American archetype: the loner, the atomized individual who must seek justice on her own, outside the society of friends and in the very teeth of the system. So she takes a martial arts course. Then she traces Doob to his lowlife haunt, a hotel in the East L.A. barrio in which he seems to be the only white resident. The few English speakers in the hood fill the air with curses. This is a vision of hell, as comfortable L.A. screenwriters imagine it most vividly: the ragged, alien center of the late-20th-century city, where English is a second language and no Starbucks outlet would dare venture. The filmmakers can't quite bring themselves to stir the memory of Willie Horton by making the villain a person of color, so they imply guilt by association: Doob is white, but, look, he lives among them.

Various subplots surface and are abandoned chiefly to delay the inevitable showdown between Field and Sutherland. And sure enough, after threatening Karen's surviving 6-year-old daughter, Doob arrogantly invades the McCanns' home once again. Dad and daughter are away, but Mom's home, and she's packing heat. Schlesinger and screenwriters Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver stage the bloody finale with unmistakable approval of Karen's solution to the urban crime problem. Then, to drive home their already belabored point, they have the cops arrive—late, naturally—and declare that Karen did what she had to do.

Ever since the Oscar-winning *Silence of the Lambs* lent critical cachet to the always commercially viable revenge movie, the film industry has lavished more and more of its aesthetic capital on such films. *Eye for an Eye* has, if nothing else, an artful look. Its bright hues and vivid locations were shot by cinematographer Amir Mokri, who often works with director Wayne Wang. The performances and direction are also workmanlike and occasionally compelling. Sutherland, in particular, convincingly inhabits Doob's empty moral universe.

But the movie's appealing gloss is canceled out by its brutal social and political messages. *Eye for an Eye* offers a vision of social squalor and isolation worthy of Thomas Hobbes. The visceral emotional logic of the film lends Hollywood's approval to blind vigilante action in defense of the



nuclear family and the detached single-family home. Moreover, the fact that the woman now gets to handle the gun adds another layer of pseudo-progressive political confusion to the unrelieved insularity of the world according to *Eye for an Eye*.

A few years ago, in *Grand Canyon*, another group of Hollywood filmmakers tried to push past the angry, reflexive cynicism that characterizes *Eye for an Eye* and come to grips with race, class and urban fear by creating recognizably human characters rather than one-note stereotypes. Although it was only partially successful, both artistically and commercially, *Grand Canyon* was heartfelt. In a character like Danny Glover's tow-truck driver, it offered a figure of simple good faith and redemptive grace. Another of *Grand Canyon's* characters, a director of violent exploitation films played by Steve Martin, also offered a rare screen critique of cynical Hollywood filmmaking. When Martin's character returned to exploitation films, the viewer could clearly see the moral vacuum at his core.

Eye for an Eye indulges in no such moments of reflection. Like kindred works in the terminally hip canon of the inescapable Quentin Tarantino, the movie can allow no more complicated human motivation than the will to power. The fact that crime statistics are down in most major American cities is a trifling consideration in the face of the fear-driven responses and tacit racial animus that *Eye for an Eye* relies upon to fatten the bottom line. Why should encouraging reality intrude when there are scary fantasies to sell? ◀

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I N P R I N T

King of the road

By Gary Chapman

William Henry Gates III, at age 40, is alone at the apex of the global economic pyramid. His company, Microsoft, despite being a mere 20 years old and employing only 17,000 people, has a book value greater than IBM or even General Motors, each of which, last year, laid off more people than Microsoft employs. Microsoft's operating system software runs 80 percent of the 125 million computers in the world, and Microsoft rakes in a staggering 50 percent of worldwide revenues in the software industry. Like a robber baron of the 19th century, Gates has squeezed nearly every competitor into a niche market. And even more than Rockefeller's oil lubricated the industrial age, Gates and Microsoft fuel and drive the information age.

But this, it seems, is just the beginning. Gates' book (which is also available as a CD-ROM) is not just a look back at how Microsoft got started, and how he got "hooked" on computers as a boy, but a glimpse of what we can all expect from the communications revolution that Gates hopes Microsoft will dominate as well. To be sure, *The Road Ahead* covers a fair amount of the history of the personal computer industry that made the young Gates richer than Croesus. But its main purpose, as the title indicates, is to educate readers about what Gates sees ahead, and the underlying, unstated theme is that Microsoft will be the gatekeeper to an inevitable future. Not only will Gates be lurking in your computer, but in nearly everything you own or do.

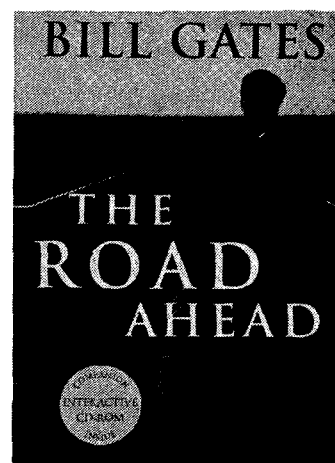
"Basically, what Microsoft is trying to do is tax every bit transition in the whole world," an executive of a competing software company told the *New York Times* recently. "When a bit flips, they will charge you." With the whole world going digital, this means that Gates doesn't just want more money—he wants *all* the money.

Microsoft is not an innovative company. Nearly all its software has been built on previous developments in computer programming. Its first operating system, DOS, which

came with the venerable IBM PC beginning 15 years ago, was largely cribbed from an earlier and now forgotten operating system called CP/M. The look and feel of Windows, the latest version of its operating system, was lifted from the interface of Apple's Macintosh (which in turn was indebted to a system developed by Xerox). Microsoft Word, its market-leading word processor, was first developed by Charles Simonyi when he worked for Xerox. (He now works for Microsoft.) Now that he can afford to, Gates simply buys up companies and people when he sees a product he likes, and then repackages the software as part of the Microsoft line. Lately, Gates has been positioning Microsoft to rule the infobahn by cornering the market for images; last year he bought the prestigious Bettmann Archives, the world's largest collection of photographs.

Gates is also eyeing attractive perches atop other related consumer and service industries. The Justice Department blocked a brazen venture into home financial management, via Gates' attempt to buy the most popular product in that field, the Quicken checking account program, but business observers expect him to figure out another way to get into that service. Now he's cutting a deal with Visa so that Microsoft will get pennies every time someone uses a Visa card online. He's also starting a new 24-hour news network with NBC and a new online magazine headed by Michael Kinsley, former talk-show host and *New Republic* editor. In *The Road Ahead*, Gates predicts that everyone will soon use electronic wallets—if that comes true, we could all be carrying around Microsoft's ghostly presence every waking minute.

Gates' success, then, is not due to remarkable technical prowess or innovative brilliance, but partly to luck, which he acknowledges in his book, and mostly to a ruthless, titanic greed and will to power that would have startled even Balzac—a trait that, not surprisingly, Gates doesn't acknowledge. "Anything not a direct lie or clearly illegal is O.K. to do and should be done if it advances Microsoft's tribal cause," Mitch Kapor, the founder of Lotus Development Corp., told James Gleick in a scathing portrait of Microsoft published recently in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. "This licenses the worst sorts of manipulations, lies, tortured self-justification and so on." Kapor added, "The question of what to do about Microsoft is going to be a central public policy



The Road Ahead
By William H. Gates III,
with Nathan Myhrvold
and Peter Rinearson
Viking Books
286 pp., \$29.95

issue for the next 20 years.”

The Machiavellian reputation of Gates and Microsoft, which has mobilized battalions of antitrust lawyers and become the recurring nightmare of every competitor, stands in such stark opposition to the breezy, boyish, ingenuous style of *The Road Ahead* that the contrast is, well, creepy. “Every aspect of what’s about to happen seems exciting,” Gates enthuses. “I can hardly wait” for the “tomorrow” of his reveries, he says, “and I’m doing what I can to help make it happen.” Elsewhere, he waxes prophetic: “I’m still thrilled by the feeling that I’m squinting into the future and catching the first revealing hint of revolutionary possibilities.” Or he will strike the pose of the adventurous impresario: “We are all beginning another great journey.”

The composite message here is clear: Bill is just along for the ride, and he’s excited, as we should all be. *The Road Ahead* reads like the script of a teenage guide at Epcot Center who can’t believe how cool everything he’s pointing out really is. “I’ve got the greatest job in the whole world,” gushes Gates, without mentioning that his “job” can boost his net worth half a billion dollars in a single day and simultaneously crush his rivals. He tells us how hard he works, because he loves his work, without a nod to the notorious, inhuman hours of Microsoft employees, who have earned the nickname “Microserfs.”

Given his personal history, it’s no surprise that Gates’ glasses, which he allegedly repairs with Scotch tape and paper clips, are deeply rose-colored. “I’m someone who believes that because progress will come no matter what, we need to make the best of it.” This narrow, ahistorical tunnel vision is typical for someone in his position; the “slaughterbench of history,” as Hegel put it, is out of sight, out of mind for Gates. Everything about the information revolution is going to be great, he believes, and although he discusses some potential problems, these will work themselves out. For example, “The fully developed information highway will be affordable—almost by definition.” Why? Because if masses of people don’t “embrace” the “information highway,” it won’t be built, simple as that. “The gap between the have and the have-not

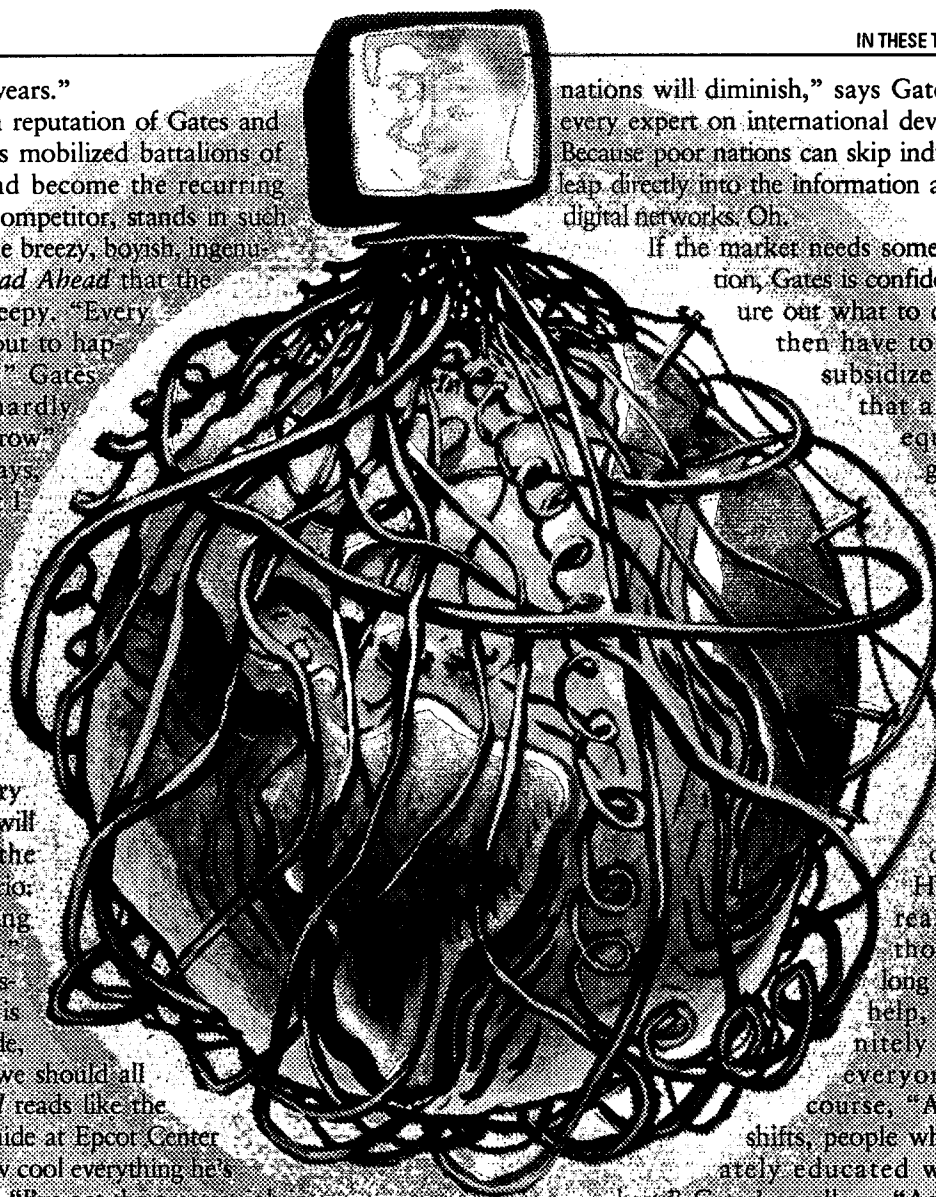
nations will diminish,” says Gates, contradicting every expert on international development. Why? Because poor nations can skip industrialization and leap directly into the information age with wireless, digital networks. Oh.

If the market needs some kind of correction, Gates is confident that we’ll figure out what to do. “Society will then have to decide how to subsidize broad access so that all users will be equal, both geographically and socioeconomically.” Gates understands that there will be upheavals in employment in what he calls “the friction-free economy”—after the elimination of “middle-men.”

He then adds a reassuring afterthought: “But as long as society needs help, there will definitely be plenty for everyone to do.” Of course, “As the economy shifts, people who are appropriately educated will tend to do best.” Gates’ corollary: “Acquire new interests and skills throughout your life.” I guess it beats jumping out a window.

The Road Ahead hews to the conventions of the gospel of uplift, a tradition in American letters that stretches back to Ben Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. Henry Ford wrote a newspaper column (as Gates does) that educated the masses about how to be successful and appreciate the benefits of capitalism. (Ford’s musings were cut off when he veered into anti-Semitism.) A good portion of the reading public seems eager for the happy nostrums of tycoons. Not only was Gates’ book an instant No. 1 bestseller, but Lee Iacocca’s autobiography and Donald Trump’s books are among the biggest selling in U.S. history. The way to get rich publishing a book in America is to be rich before you write it, and then tell everyone that, yes, it feels great. (The profits from *The Road Ahead*, it should be noted, are going to an educational charity.)

Gates’ variation on this genre is a celebration of nerdhood. Gates is already well known as the King of the Nerds, a personality type so uniform and rich in its fea-



tures that one suspects it goes beyond socialization to some sort of genetic root. (Were there nerds in the Middle Ages?) Gates admits that he focuses his mind and channels his buzzing hyperactivity by rocking back and forth in his chair, which must be a disturbing habit for those around him. He flies coach and frequently sleeps on planes curled up in a blanket. He is famously absent-minded: Before she died, his mother reportedly scheduled his entire day on a whiteboard in his house, down to the details of what clothes he should wear. He has to be reminded to wash his hair. These quirks are different from the eccentricities of Howard Hughes, the previous paradigm of the nutty billionaire, who was addicted to drugs and probably just

plain crazy. Gates' busy mind is totally absorbed with computers and software, and the rest of the world seems to be largely ephemeral to him. (In the book, his wife Melinda is only mentioned, without endearments, in a list of people in the acknowledgments.)

Because of this monomania, *The Road Ahead* is not only suffused with Gates' unconditional, adolescent zeal for computers, but is essentially a catalogue of how digital technologies will fill every nook and cranny of our lives in the future. Gates doesn't use the term, but his ideal of human existence is that of a "cyborg," a person who cannot fully experience life without being hooked to a

Continued on page 39

S P E E D R E A D I N G

The Seven Cultures of Capitalism

Charles Hampden-Turner and Alfons Trompenaars

Doubleday

405 pp., \$25

Post-Cold War writers and pundits have begun noticing a fairly obvious fact: Capitalism is not, and never has been, a monolith. It manifests important variations from nation to nation, and books trying to explain these national differences, with names like *Capitalism vs. Capitalism* and *Beyond Capitalism*, began appearing in the early 1990s.

Now *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism* by Charles Hampden-Turner and Alfons Trompenaars updates the genre while revising its methodology in some important ways. Most surveys of the different management styles of global capitalism offer anecdotal homilies and insights culled from encounters with a handful of business leaders, but *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism* gets its empirical hands dirty. The authors—British and Dutch business consultants trained in the United States—circulated some 15,000 questionnaires to business managers from around the world who attended various seminars sponsored by the Center for International Business Studies from 1986 to 1993. The questions posed a series of decision-making dilemmas that sought to gauge how values, habits and cultural styles affected the pursuit of economic success. Respondents in each of the "seven cultures" the authors studied—the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden and the Netherlands—reacted in startlingly different ways that reflected their national culture.

Questions designed to measure individualism and self-interest, for example, revealed that American and British managers assign a far higher premium to the individual's responsibility and prowess than do their counterparts in Germany or Japan, who give much greater stress to teamwork. Each culture, the authors argue, structures time, elucidates the proper behavior for climbing up the corporate ladder and shapes loyalty among employees and employers in distinctive ways. These differences, in turn, give different

faces to capitalist enterprise in each country.

Why should progressives care about such hair-splitting in the capitalist camp? Because, as Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars argue, cultural attitudes also influence national policies on issues such as poverty, social security, immigration, workers' rights and deregulation. For example, the hyper-individualist brand of American-British capitalism treats poverty as a sign of personal failure, idleness and disgrace. But Germany, Austria, Scandinavia and Japan all regard poverty as the economic consequence of workers finding themselves mired in declining industries. Social security and the social safety net are regarded—by business managers, no less—as a way of socializing the costs and dislocations produced by economic changes beyond the control of individuals.

Such findings confirm what American progressives have known for a long time: American managers are, in contrast to those in many leading business cultures, hyperindividualists, and the country's cultural values produce businesses that are shortsighted, overly hierarchical and authoritarian, and narrowly focused on quarterly profit sheets.

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars address a host of questions beyond individualism and its consequences. They analyze the roles of long- vs. short-term planning, reactions to and use of technology, concepts of community and hierarchy and more. At times, the study relies on oversimplistic cultural generalizations, but it is always engaging.

The authors ultimately conclude that the future path of capitalist development will have to be kinder and gentler. "No person can grow in individuality without the support of the community, and no community can long survive without the allegiance of its individuals," they argue.

This sort of reformist formula will hardly result in the overthrow of capitalism. Yet the empirical work and lively writing in Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars' book afford a refreshing perspective on the comparative study of capitalist cultures. If "knowing thy enemy" has any value in the struggle for social and economic justice, then *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism* is a solid contribution toward that effort.

—Steven Hill

True believer

By Wilson Carey McWilliams

At first glance, nothing would seem to speak more eloquently to the beleaguered state of American liberalism than to have one of its most respected defenders speaking of it in quasi-religious terms. The Republicans have the hard sell—and the hard heart—of the Contract with America; former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo now offers in reply a “reason to believe.” But despite the seeming faintness of its call to arms, Cuomo’s book, conceived as a response to the “New Harshness” on the right, provides additional evidence that Cuomo is a singular figure in American politics, almost as out of place as Thomas Aquinas at a rap concert.

For one thing, Cuomo is a master of rhetoric, that declining art, and a link to the time when radio created a politics of voice. In fact, you’ll probably end up wanting the audio version of Cuomo reading the text: The book is really speeches on paper, and the best part of Cuomo’s writing is its capacity to invoke the sound and measure of his oratory. Calm and didactic, ecclesiastical rather than evangelical, Cuomo’s cadences are very different from the rage and whining that now seem to dominate political debate.

And tone aside, Cuomo doesn’t fit easily into our ideological categories. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of his dream and invited us to envision the future; Cuomo appeals to memory and asks us to recall the past. In part, Cuomo wants to remind Americans of the dark side of the old times—the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, the company stores of the American industrial revolution and all the “wretched social catastrophes created by the 150 years of macho individualism” that preceded the New Deal. But he also admires the old virtues and invokes the example of his immigrant parents, especially his mother. Cuomo is a kind of Burkean Whig, concerned to teach liberals—and Americans generally—that our politics is a precarious achieve-

ment, the result of a now-weakening alliance between private decencies and public policy.

This fragility, of course, is accentuated by America’s contemporary economic problems. Cuomo rehearses the litany: Real hourly wages have been dropping; for a two wage-earner family, income is largely where it was in 1979; corporations are treating workers as “disposable commodities”; inequality, already towering, is coming to suggest Babel. And Cuomo recognizes that the economy contributes to some of the worst problems of the culture—for example, the way in which “advertising-driven” consumerism exalts immediate gratification, or the fact that economic embattlement leads to fiercer competition and to rabid efforts to defend the distinctions, real or imagined, that separate middle- and working-class Americans from social indignity.

Nor does Cuomo absolve his own party from responsibility for the disarray of American politics and culture. The Democrats, he argues, have been missing the point in critical respects. As the party of the state, they were too slow to acknowledge the shortcomings and failures of government programs. And they have downplayed questions of growing public concern, such as the importance of punishment in dealing with crime. Most important, eager to help the oppressed, Democrats slighted working- and middle-class Americans at a time when Republicans—while denouncing “class war”—successfully pointed middle-class resentments and fears toward government, minorities and the poor.

Rather quietly, Cuomo is prescribing a Democratic return to class politics, and if his proposals are not that exciting—he emphasizes public investment, especially in education—here and there he shows flair, as in his suggestion that government contracts or other support for business should be tied to companies’ records in resisting job cuts and promoting an environment of “cooperative venture and shared risk.” He also has the courage to argue that a balanced budget is something of a shibboleth, because moderate borrowing is a form of investment in the future.

At bottom, however, Cuomo is a moralist and a critic of American culture. He makes the obvious point that conservatives have no serious answers to the problems of guns, drugs or the education of poor children. More subtly, he observes that denying welfare to the

Reason
to Believe

Mario
Cuomo

Reason to Believe
By Mario Cuomo
Simon and Schuster
191 pp., \$21

children of unwed mothers would almost certainly add to the number of abortions, a figure Cuomo regards as already unacceptably high: Despite his quarrels with the Catholic hierarchy over his support of a woman's right to choose, Cuomo shares his church's dread of the developing "culture of death."

At a still more fundamental level, Cuomo recognizes that America, a "nation without bloodline" and perpetually subject to the relativism of market capitalism, depends on public values for its identity. But the Constitution, designed to promote individual liberty, "does not ask us to join together, to share intelligently, to love," and affords no adequate barrier to the individualism that Cuomo sees as the republic's nemesis. Yet where Lincoln, one of Cuomo's heroes, turned from the Constitution to the Declaration of Independence, Cuomo urges Americans to see themselves as a "family" committed to the ideals of opportunity, liberty and responsibility. It is striking, especially since Cuomo is so eloquent an advocate of government, that these are essentially *private* principles. Even "responsibility," in Cuomo's definition, comes down to an obligation to work, care for one's family and pay one's bills and taxes. Cuomo's communitarianism hints at a redefinition of American identity more expansive than Lincoln's, because it implies that the nation-as-family needs to constitute not merely a government but a society.

There are precedents—the Wagner Act's role in forwarding unionization is one instance—but Cuomo is cautious, prudently worried about giving government too broad a charter for social reconstruction. He prefers to speak, for example, about *eliminating* welfare regulations that discourage work and family life (although he also talks about requiring unwed mothers to live in their parents' apartments). And at critical points, Cuomo relies on public-spirited opinion rather than government control: Recognizing the need to discourage indecency and incivility in the media, Cuomo offers an analogy to the ways in which broad concern for healthier cuisine pushed McDonald's to put salads on the menu. It's an unpersuasive comparison, however: Our improved eating habits chiefly reflect private motives, not civic spirit. If anything, Cuomo understates the American dilemma.

We are growing more interdependent by the minute, but it isn't inspiring much family feeling. The forces that are tying us together, en masse, are simultaneously fragmenting localities, intruding on intimacies and unsettling work, so that most Americans are preoccupied with defending the shrinking peripheries of private life. Government, Cuomo's talisman, typically seems only a slightly less impersonal part of the congeries of distant and baffling dominations and powers. Fewer and fewer Americans are feeling self-governing, or that they have a say: Public spirit is in short supply, in large part, because citizens can't find themselves in the public.

Cuomo knows all this and comments on it, but it doesn't claim much of his attention. Reasons to believe, finally, are

not ways of acting, and Cuomo talks more about democratic government than about democratic politics. He understands the need to limit the power of money in elections, but the reforms he suggests are moderate and unsurprising. He opposes term limits—a bad idea whose time may have passed—but he says almost nothing about the possibilities for re forging the chain of representation, pretty much ignoring political parties, the political implications of the Internet or designs for bringing politics back to its roots in local deliberation. And here and there, Cuomo argues, in the old progressive mode, for insulating government from politics, substituting administrative decision for public debate. Like most of us, Cuomo needs to remind himself, every now and then, that democratic politics, for all its scruffiness, has its own promise and can—as Tocqueville taught—be our best school of public spirit.

Of course, reclaiming the public sphere and the democratic practices that enliven it is an ongoing project, well beyond the scope of jeremiads aimed at the ideological heart of the Republican Congress. Even so, Cuomo is one of the few heirs to the liberal tradition who is able to evoke the possibility of a nation moved by a higher moral purpose. He remains an indispensable voice, a grand champion of the republic's hopes and memories. ◀

Wilson Carey McWilliams is a professor of political science at Rutgers University and the author, most recently, of *The Politics of Disappointment: American Elections, 1976-1994* (Chatham House).

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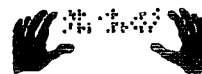
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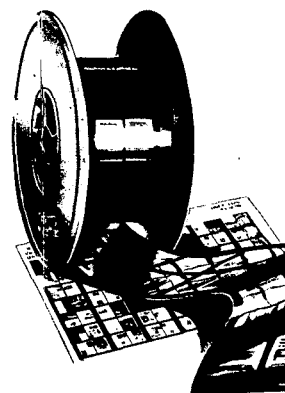
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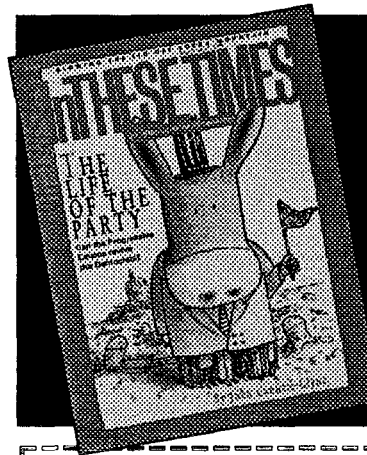
machine. Your "network connection," he writes, "will be more than an object you carry or an appliance you purchase. It will be your passport into a new, mediated way of life." The most widely discussed chapter in the book is Gates' description of his new house, which, unlike William Randolph Hearst's San Simeon or Cornelius Vanderbilt's Breakers, is not a showcase of opulent Old World antiques but instead an exposition of wacky household technology, like electronic badges for his guests and wallscreens with changing digital displays of artwork. Elsewhere, Gates lists a series of questions that will be answerable via the coming, ubiquitous "information highway," and the questions are so quirky and diverse—"What's a good recipe for halibut?" "How is the hole in a needle manufactured?" "Do fish see in color?" "What does the Champs Elysées look like right now?"—that he implies no one will know anything without a cyber-connection. Gates quotes Antoine de Saint-Exupéry approvingly: "Little by little, the machine will become part of humanity."

Thus the popularity of this book is ominous. For example, Gates blithely floats the idea of a total surveillance society, with cameras on every power pole, or even on each person, so that we can record every movement of our lives—an innovation that he describes, with stunning naiveté, as a defense against falsehood. While he admits that such policies might make some people anxious about privacy, the benefits of preventing both crime and police brutality (!) should outweigh those reservations, he thinks. These speculations are those of a mind clouded by technophilia, dangerous in that they may soften others' instinctive resistance.

The Road Ahead is also a deeply right-wing book, though Gates is typically viewed as non-ideological, or even above ideology. Gates thinks that the "information highway" will make possible "the realization of Adam Smith's ideal market, at last." And like other right-wing studies in free-market mythology, it succumbs to nattering condescension: Its descriptions of technology are so one-sided, and so Dick-and-Jane simplistic, that Gates' manic cheerleading is eventually irritating and maddening. The book begins to sound like a paternal lecture to naifs, especially those who might have irrational, uneducated or childish doubts about the marvels of digitalism. "Change of this magnitude makes people nervous," Gates concedes, but then he waves away the deep, soul-gnawing anxiety about technological change that is turning our society into a powder keg.

Many people in the computer industry already regarded Microsoft as the most dangerous company in the world before this book appeared. Now the rest of us have ample reason to fear Bill Gates, ironically the least fearsome-looking man on the planet. Where is Orwell when we need him?

Gary Chapman is coordinator of the 21st Century Project at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.



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Bob Dole's Christmas Grinches

By Woody Igou

Santa has come and gone at the Dole household. Along with the campaign contributions from the NRA and the tobacco lobby for being a good boy, Sen. Dole received some gifts of a more disturbing nature. *ITT* scavenged some of these Xmas remembrances out of the Dole trash bin.

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